



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 24th 2026

SB944

Data Privacy - Consumer Data, Public Records, and Message Switching System (Data Privacy Act)

Economic Matters Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 944**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 944 establishes a coordinated Reentry Readiness Program within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and requires the Department to work in partnership with the Motor Vehicle Administration, the Division of Vital Records, and the Department of Labor. The goal is to ensure that individuals returning to society have access to essential documents, identification, workforce support, and the foundational resources they need to transition successfully.

The intent of this bill is straightforward: to reduce the unnecessary barriers that too often lead to cycles of recidivism, unemployment, and instability. Many individuals leave incarceration without a state ID, birth certificate, or access to job training—basic tools that are necessary to secure housing, apply for employment, enroll in education, or receive healthcare benefits. By requiring the relevant state agencies to collaborate directly, this program increases efficiency, minimizes delays, and ensures that returning citizens leave custody better equipped to contribute positively to their communities. This strengthens public safety, reduces taxpayer costs associated with reincarceration, and supports stronger, more resilient families across Maryland.

This legislation also speaks deeply to the values of Catholic social teaching, which calls us to uphold the dignity of every person and to support pathways to redemption and restoration. The principles of human dignity and the preferential option for the vulnerable remind us that no individual is defined solely by past mistakes; each person deserves the chance to rebuild their life with hope and stability. Ensuring that returning citizens have the tools they need to reintegrate successfully honors the belief that all people are created in the image of God and are capable of transformation.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 944**.