

# SENATE BILL 121

P1, E4

(PRE-FILED)

6lr1660

CF 6lr1662

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By: Senator Hester

Requested: November 1, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

### 2 Personal Information – Public Servant Protections

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing a certain protected individual or the agency, entity, or office  
4 that the protected individual serves or served to request that a governmental entity  
5 or person not publish personal information on the Internet, social media, or social  
6 networks or that the governmental entity or person remove the information from any  
7 existing publication; specifying certain procedures for the protection of personal  
8 information of a protected individual; authorizing certain relief for a violation of this  
9 Act; establishing a criminal penalty for publicly posting the personal information of  
10 a protected individual under certain circumstances; establishing the Public Servant  
11 Address Confidentiality Program administered by the Secretary of State; and  
12 generally relating to the protection of personal information.

13 BY adding to

14 Article – State Government

15 Section 7–401 through 7–405 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 4. Personal  
16 Information – Public Servant Protections”

17 Annotated Code of Maryland

18 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

19 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

20 Article – Real Property

21 Section 3–114(a)

22 Annotated Code of Maryland

23 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

24 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

25 Article – Real Property

26 Section 3–114(d)

27 Annotated Code of Maryland

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

2 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
3 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

## **Article – State Government**

## **SUBTITLE 4. PERSONAL INFORMATION – PUBLIC SERVANT PROTECTIONS.**

6 7-401.

7           (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
8 INDICATED.

9           (B) "ACTUAL ADDRESS" MEANS A RESIDENTIAL STREET ADDRESS,  
10 INCLUDING PRIMARY RESIDENCE OR SECONDARY RESIDENCE, OF A PROTECTED  
11 INDIVIDUAL AS SPECIFIED ON THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL'S APPLICATION TO BE A  
12 PROGRAM PARTICIPANT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

13           (c) "GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY" MEANS A STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL  
14 ENTITY.

15 (D) (1) "PERSONAL INFORMATION" MEANS:

## 16 (I) A HOME ADDRESS:

### (III) A MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER:

19 (IV) A PERSONAL E-MAIL ADDRESS:

**(V) A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:**

21 (VI) A DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER:

**(VII) A FEDERAL TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER:**

(VIII) A BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER:

24 (IX) A CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD NUMBER:

1                             (XI) A BIRTH OR MARITAL RECORD;

2                             (XII) A CHILD'S NAME;

3                             (XIII) A SCHOOL OR DAYCARE;

4                             (XIV) A PLACE OF WORSHIP; OR

5                             (XV) A PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED IN

6 SUBSECTION (G)(8) OF THIS SECTION.

7                             (2) "PERSONAL INFORMATION" DOES NOT INCLUDE:

8                             (I) INFORMATION THAT HAS BEEN PUBLICLY DISCLOSED WITH

9 THE CONSENT OF THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL; OR

10                             (II) INFORMATION THAT IS RELEVANT TO AND DISPLAYED AS

11 PART OF A NEWS STORY, COMMENTARY, AN EDITORIAL, OR ANY OTHER SPEECH ON

12 MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN.

13                             (E) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE PUBLIC SERVANT ADDRESS

14 CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM.

15                             (F) "PROGRAM PARTICIPANT" MEANS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL

16 DESIGNATED AS A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

17                             (G) "PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL" MEANS:

18                             (1) AN ATTORNEY EMPLOYED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY

19 GENERAL;

20                             (2) THE STATE PROSECUTOR;

21                             (3) A STATE'S ATTORNEY OR ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY;

22                             (4) A U.S. ATTORNEY OR OTHER FEDERAL PROSECUTOR DOMICILED

23 IN THE STATE;

24                             (5) A CURRENT OR RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER AS

25 DEFINED IN § 1-101 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE;

1                   **(6) A CURRENT OR RETIRED MEMBER OF A POLICE FORCE OR OTHER**  
2 **UNIT OF THE UNITED STATES WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PREVENTION AND**  
3 **DETECTION OF CRIME AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE CRIMINAL LAWS OF THE**  
4 **UNITED STATES DOMICILED IN THE STATE;**

5                   **(7) A FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL; OR**

6                   **(8) A SPOUSE, A CHILD, OR A DEPENDENT WHO RESIDES IN THE SAME**  
7 **HOUSEHOLD AS AN INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED IN ITEMS (1) THROUGH (7) OF THIS**  
8 **SUBSECTION.**

9                   **(H) “PUBLISH” MEANS TO POST OR OTHERWISE MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE**  
10 **GENERAL PUBLIC ON THE INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA, OR SOCIAL NETWORKS.**

11 **7-402.**

12                  **(A) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE AGENCY, ENTITY, OR OFFICE IN**  
13 **WHICH THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED, MAY REQUEST THAT A**  
14 **GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY:**

15                  **(1) NOT PUBLISH THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL’S PERSONAL**  
16 **INFORMATION; OR**

17                  **(2) REMOVE THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL’S PERSONAL**  
18 **INFORMATION FROM ANY EXISTING PUBLICATION.**

19                  **(B) A REQUEST MADE UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL:**

20                  **(1) BE IN WRITING;**

21                  **(2) BE SENT BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL;**

22                  **(3) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION,**  
23 **PROVIDE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO CONFIRM THAT THE REQUESTER IS A**  
24 **PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL; AND**

25                  **(4) ADEQUATELY IDENTIFY THE DOCUMENT, POSTING, OR OTHER**  
26 **PUBLICATION CONTAINING THE PERSONAL INFORMATION.**

27                  **(C) A REQUEST MADE BY AN AGENCY, ENTITY, OR OFFICE IN WHICH A**  
28 **PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED CERTIFIES THAT A REQUESTER IS A**  
29 **PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL AND NO FURTHER INFORMATION MAY BE REQUIRED TO**  
30 **CONFIRM THAT THE REQUESTER IS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL.**

1           (D) ON RECEIPT OF A REQUEST UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION,  
2 A GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY SHALL PROMPTLY ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE  
3 REQUEST IN WRITING BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL AND:

4               (1) TAKE STEPS REASONABLY NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THE  
5 PERSONAL INFORMATION IS NOT PUBLISHED; OR

6               (2) IF THE PERSONAL INFORMATION IS ALREADY PUBLISHED,  
7 PROVIDE FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE PERSONAL INFORMATION WITHIN 72 HOURS  
8 AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST.

9           (E) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY  
10 GENERAL ON BEHALF OF A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, MAY BRING AN ACTION FOR A  
11 VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION AGAINST A GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY FOR:

12               (1) DECLARATORY RELIEF;

13               (2) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF; OR

14               (3) REASONABLE ATTORNEY'S FEES.

15 **7-403.**

16           (A) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE AGENCY, ENTITY, OR OFFICE IN  
17 WHICH THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED, MAY REQUEST THAT A  
18 PERSON WHO HAS PUBLISHED THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONAL  
19 INFORMATION REMOVE THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONAL INFORMATION  
20 FROM PUBLICATION.

21           (B) A REQUEST MADE UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL:

22               (1) BE IN WRITING;

23               (2) BE SENT BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL;

24               (3) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION,  
25 PROVIDE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO CONFIRM THAT THE REQUESTER IS A  
26 PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL; AND

27               (4) ADEQUATELY IDENTIFY THE DOCUMENT, POSTING, OR OTHER  
28 PUBLICATION CONTAINING THE PERSONAL INFORMATION.

1           (C) A REQUEST MADE BY AN AGENCY, ENTITY, OR OFFICE IN WHICH A  
2 PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED CERTIFIES THAT A REQUESTER IS A  
3 PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL AND NO FURTHER INFORMATION MAY BE REQUIRED TO  
4 CONFIRM THAT THE REQUESTER IS A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL.

5           (D) THE PERSON TO WHOM THE REQUEST IS MADE SHALL:

6               (1) PROVIDE FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE PERSONAL INFORMATION  
7 WITHIN 72 HOURS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST; AND

8               (2) NOTIFY THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL OR THE OFFICE IN WHICH  
9 THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL SERVES OR SERVED BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL  
10 OF THE REMOVAL.

11           (E) (1) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY  
12 GENERAL ON BEHALF OF A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, MAY BRING AN ACTION FOR A  
13 VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION AGAINST A PERSON FOR:

14                  (I) DECLARATORY RELIEF;

15                  (II) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF;

16                  (III) DAMAGES INCURRED AS THE RESULT OF A VIOLATION OF  
17 THIS SECTION; OR

18                  (IV) REASONABLE ATTORNEY'S FEES.

19               (2) IN ADDITION TO THE RELIEF PROVIDED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1)  
20 OF THIS SUBSECTION, IF A COURT FINDS THAT A PERSON WILLFULLY REFUSED TO  
21 PROVIDE FOR THE REMOVAL OF PERSONAL INFORMATION KNOWING THAT THE  
22 INDIVIDUAL ON BEHALF OF WHOM THE REQUEST WAS MADE WAS A PROTECTED  
23 INDIVIDUAL, THE COURT MAY AWARD PUNITIVE DAMAGES.

24 7-404.

25           (A) AN INDIVIDUAL MAY NOT KNOWINGLY PUBLISH THE PERSONAL  
26 INFORMATION OF A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL IF:

27               (1) THE INDIVIDUAL KNOWS OR REASONABLY SHOULD KNOW THAT  
28 PUBLISHING THE PERSONAL INFORMATION POSES AN IMMINENT AND SERIOUS  
29 THREAT TO THE PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL; AND

30               (2) THE PUBLISHING OF THE PERSONAL INFORMATION RESULTS IN:

- (I) AN ASSAULT IN ANY DEGREE;**
  - (II) HARASSMENT;**
  - (III) TRESPASS; OR**
  - (IV) MALICIOUS DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY.**

5           **(B) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF A**  
6        **MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT NOT**  
7        **EXCEEDING 18 MONTHS OR A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$5,000 OR BOTH.**

8 7-405.

**(A) THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION IS TO:**

10                   **(1) ENABLE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS**  
11   **FOR PUBLIC RECORDS WITHOUT DISCLOSING THE ACTUAL ADDRESS OF A PROGRAM**  
12   **PARTICIPANT;**

18           (B) (1) THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHALL ESTABLISH AND ADMINISTER A  
19 PUBLIC SERVANT ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM FOR PROTECTED  
20 INDIVIDUALS.

(2) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL MAY APPLY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE  
PROGRAM IN THE MANNER REQUIRED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

23                   **(3) ON RECEIPT OF AN APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE**  
24 **PROGRAM, THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHALL DETERMINE WHETHER THE**  
25 **APPLICANT QUALIFIES AS A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT.**

26 (C) (1) A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT MAY:

1                           **(I) REQUEST THAT A PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY USE**  
2   A SUBSTITUTE ADDRESS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS THE  
3   PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S ADDRESS;

4                           **(II) REQUEST THE SHIELDING OF REAL PROPERTY RECORDS IN**  
5   ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 3, SUBTITLE 1, PART II OF THE REAL PROPERTY  
6   ARTICLE; AND

7                           **(III) REQUEST THAT A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL**  
8   ADDRESS BE SHIELDED FROM PUBLIC INSPECTION IN A RECORD MAINTAINED BY A  
9   GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY.

10                          **(2) ON RECEIPT OF A REQUEST UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS**  
11   SUBSECTION BY A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT, A PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY  
12   SHALL:

13                          **(I) PROMPTLY ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST IN**  
14   WRITING BY CERTIFIED MAIL OR BY E-MAIL; AND

15                          **(II) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPHS (3) AND (4) OF THIS**  
16   SUBSECTION, TAKE STEPS REASONABLY NECESSARY TO COMPLY WITH THE  
17   REQUEST.

18                          **(3) A CUSTODIAN OF RECORD MAY:**

19                          **(I) MAINTAIN A COPY OF A RECORD CONTAINING A PROGRAM**  
20   PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL ADDRESS IN A SEPARATE SECURE AREA TO WHICH PERSONS  
21   WHO DO NOT HAVE A LEGITIMATE REASON FOR ACCESS ARE DENIED ACCESS;

22                          **(II) PERMIT PUBLIC INSPECTION OF A RECORD WITH THE**  
23   CONSENT OF THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT;

24                          **(III) PERMIT PUBLIC INSPECTION OF A RECORD WITH THE**  
25   ACTUAL ADDRESS REDACTED FROM THE RECORD; OR

26                          **(IV) AFTER NOTIFICATION TO THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT,**  
27   PERMIT PUBLIC INSPECTION OF A RECORD IF THE INSPECTION WILL FURTHER A  
28   SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC INTEREST OR A LEGITIMATE BUSINESS NEED.

29                          **(4) (I) EACH LOCAL BOARD OF ELECTIONS SHALL USE A PROGRAM**  
30   PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL ADDRESS FOR ALL ELECTION-RELATED PURPOSES.

## 1. VOTER REGISTRATION;

5                           **2. A CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY FILED UNDER § 5-301**  
6   **OF THE ELECTION LAW ARTICLE; OR**

**3. CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS  
UNDER TITLE 13 OF THE ELECTION LAW ARTICLE.**

13                   **1. ON REQUEST BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY FOR**  
14 **LAW ENFORCEMENT PURPOSES:**

17                           **3. FOR A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT WHO IS AN ELECTED**  
18 **OFFICIAL, AS REQUIRED UNDER STATE ELECTION LAW.**

19           (D) A RECORD OF A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL ADDRESS AND  
20 TELEPHONE NUMBER MAINTAINED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE OR A  
21 GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY IS NOT A PUBLIC RECORD WITHIN THE MEANING OF §  
22 4-101 OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS ARTICLE.

23           (E) (1) A PERSON MAY NOT KNOWINGLY DISCLOSE A PROGRAM  
24 PARTICIPANT'S ACTUAL ADDRESS.

25                   **(2) A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, OR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON**  
26 **BEHALF OF A PROTECTED INDIVIDUAL, MAY BRING AN ACTION FOR A VIOLATION OF**  
27 **THIS SUBSECTION FOR:**

28 (I) DECLARATORY RELIEF:

## (II) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF: OR

**Article – Real Property**

2 3–114.

3 (a) In this part the following words have the meanings indicated.

4 (d) “Address Confidentiality Program” means [the]:

5 (1) THE Address Confidentiality Program for survivors of threatened,  
6 attempted, or actual domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, harassment, or human  
7 trafficking administered by the Secretary under Title 7, Subtitle 3 of the State Government  
8 Article;

9 (2) THE PUBLIC SERVANT ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM  
10 ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER TITLE 7,  
11 SUBTITLE 4 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE; and [the]

12 (3) THE Judicial Address Confidentiality Program administered by the  
13 Administrative Office of the Courts under Title 3, Subtitle 24 of the Courts Article.

14 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
15 October 1, 2026.