

# HOUSE BILL 304

P3

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By: Delegate Grammer

Introduced and read first time: January 15, 2026

Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

### 2 **Public Information Act – Data Manipulation**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing that a new public record is not created if, in responding to  
4 a certain request under the Public Information Act, a custodian conducts certain  
5 data manipulation; and generally relating to data manipulation and the Public  
6 Information Act.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

8 Article – General Provisions

9 Section 4–205(c)

10 Annotated Code of Maryland

11 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

13 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

### 14 **Article – General Provisions**

15 4–205.

16 (c) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the custodian of  
17 a public record shall provide an applicant with a copy of the public record in a searchable  
18 and analyzable electronic format if:

19 (i) the public record is in a searchable and analyzable electronic  
20 format;

21 (ii) the applicant requests a copy of the public record in a searchable  
22 and analyzable electronic format; and

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(iii) the custodian is able to provide a copy of the public record, in whole or in part, in a searchable and analyzable electronic format that does not disclose:

3                                   1. confidential or protected information for which the  
4 custodian is required to deny inspection in accordance with Subtitle 3, Parts I through III  
5 of this title; or

8                         (2) The State Department of Assessments and Taxation is not required to  
9 provide an applicant with a copy of the public record in a searchable and analyzable  
10 electronic format if the State Department of Assessments and Taxation has provided the  
11 public record to a contractor that will provide the applicant a copy of the public record in a  
12 searchable and analyzable electronic format for a reasonable cost.

(3) A custodian may remove metadata from an electronic document before providing the electronic document to an applicant by:

15 (i) using a software program or function; or

16 (ii) converting the electronic document into a different searchable  
17 and analyzable format.

18 (4) This subsection may not be construed to:

22 (ii) allow a custodian to make a public record available only in an  
23 electronic format;

26 (iv) require a custodian to release an electronic record in a format  
27 that would jeopardize or compromise the security or integrity of the original record or of  
28 any proprietary software in which the record is maintained.

29                                 (5)     (I)     If a public record exists in a searchable and analyzable electronic  
30 format, the act of a custodian providing a portion of the public record in a searchable and  
31 analyzable electronic format does not constitute creating a new public record.

**1 RECORDS DATABASE PROGRAM IS CAPABLE OF PERFORMING TO PRODUCE THE  
2 RECORD.**

**3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
4 October 1, 2026.**