



TESTIMONY FOR HB1018

Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Minimum Mandatory Standards

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Stewart

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1018 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

We are all horrified at what we are seeing on a daily basis in relation to immigration enforcement in this country. It is no longer about deporting immigrants who have committed criminal acts. It has morphed into the rounding up and detaining of virtually anyone the ICE agents decide they don't like, regardless of citizenship or criminality.

While we are horrified at what we are seeing, we are not seeing everything that is happening. Behind the walls of detention centers, horrific conditions are the norm and crimes are committed against many of the people who are detained. People have died from neglect and also from abuse. This is only the beginning, though. What the government wants to do is detain tens of thousands of people in small cramped spaces with little access to the basic necessities of life.

This bill, if enacted, would try to set guardrails around what can happen in detention facilities. It requires the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services to adopt regulations establishing minimum mandatory standards governing the care, custody, and conditions of detainees in immigration detention facilities. Some of those standards include –

- Security
- Safety
- Food services
- Housing and Sanitation
- Individual Rights
- Classification, Victim Notification, and Restitution
- Administrative Record Keeping

It allows for anyone (including employees or visitors, such as health professionals) to file a complaint regarding any violation of standards anonymously and online, and sets procedures for follow up. Depending on what is discovered, remedies will be proposed, up to and including shutting down the facility as being life-threatening.

In addition, procedures for inspecting detention centers are to be developed and if anyone interferes with the inspection, the facility can be shut down as life-threatening. If the detention center is privately owned, financial penalties up to \$10,000 per violation plus attorney's fees and other fees will be imposed.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.