



TESTIMONY ON HB1017 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities -
Zoning Requirement
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
February 12, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Laura Atwood. I work in healthcare (as an inpatient physical therapist) and am an allied health member of the organization Doctors for Camp Closure. We have tracked medical abuses, neglects, and deaths in immigration detention over the past 10 years.

No detention is safe. ICE has a terrible track record (with over 30 deaths so far in 2026), and it now refuses facility inspection by members of Congress. Horrific video emerged from where people were being held in Baltimore, in violation of numerous laws.

Our Maryland communities are being devastated by ICE/CBP. Every human being who's abducted and detained is part of a community--whether a parent, worker, church leader or member, caregiver, or neighbor. People who've experienced detention are traumatized and changed by this, as are their loved ones. It is horrific, and we must do everything we can to minimize this.

Immigrant-led organizations, including CASA, have long held that increased detention space encourages increased detention. That was the rationale for the bill Dignity Not Detention. When private and local public detention are in question, there is a powerful and disgusting profit motive as well (to get paid per person by ICE). We don't want our neighbors detained, period.

Doctors for Camp Closure therefore respectfully urges this committee to return a favorable report on HB1017. Thank you.