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District 10

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1018 - Correctional Services - Immigration Detention
Facilities - Minimum Mandatory Standards

2/12/2026

TO: Chair Melissa Wells and Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections
Committee

FROM: Cara Chang

Chair Wells and Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee, my name is Cara Chang and I live in Reisterstown, Maryland. I am writing to urge you to support HB1017 to ensure a minimum standard of care for residents of immigration detention centers.

Incarcerated people are a vulnerable population that deserves the same minimum level of care that any person should receive in our country: access to food, safe sleeping quarters, and healthcare. Unfortunately, we have seen negligence and human rights abuses documented in privately-owned detention centers throughout the US. Human rights are for all people, regardless of their citizenship or criminal history. That said, the majority of people detained in these facilities have not committed a crime and are in this country legally—and often include US citizens.

The motivation of privately-owned detention centers is not to enforce law or protect people, but to maximize profits. Their operators have shown repeatedly that they will not ensure human treatment of their residents unless forced to do so. Furthermore, we have seen in recent months that Federal law enforcement is willing to overlook and perpetuate human rights abuses of citizens and non-citizens alike. Thus, relying on Federal law to protect people in detention centers in our state is not enough. Maryland has the opportunity to prevent human suffering and ensure that when people are detained, regardless of their immigration status, they are safe.

Please support HB1018 to create an avenue to hold detention centers accountable for humane treatment in Maryland.