

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

My name is Stephanie and I'm a resident of Owings Mills, MD. I also work at an outreach center in Baltimore County for those experiencing homelessness. Many of the people I interact with on a daily basis are immigrants. I am writing in support of **HB 1018 Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Minimum Mandatory Standards**. I'm writing to speak up for my friends, neighbors, coworkers, strangers, and all of my compañeros. I am writing because I'm sick of wondering where our clients might be when they don't show up for several weeks, not knowing whether that person has been targeted or arrested for the non-crime of being an immigrant and experiencing homelessness.

These warehouses that they are masquerading as "detention centers" for "the worst of the worst" are not about crime or safety. These property sales are about bigotry and power. They are about concentrating all forces to target the most vulnerable in our society. They are about profiting off of the misery of American families. Even though a clean criminal record shouldn't be a condition of staying in this country (if that were true, you'd have to deport me), the vast majority of those targeted have NO criminal record, let alone a violent one, despite what Noem and the rest of MAGA continues to erroneously claim with their baseless fear-mongering. Maryland should NOT stand with them and contribute to the ongoing and, frankly, terrifying white supremacist takeover of our once-welcoming country.

It makes me physically nauseous to think that 5 Washington County representatives voted unanimously on Tuesday morning to turn a warehouse not fit for human habitation into another one of MAGA's concentration camps. Make no mistake: these are no different from the internment camps created during World War 2 for the express purpose of racial discrimination and exclusion of Asian Americans. What has our world come to when we're reliving this awful blight in our history? I remember, as a kid, reacting in horror and disgust in my history class when I first learned about these deplorable internment camps. I remember thinking, thank god something like that would never happen nowadays. It sickens me how wrong I was in that thinking. It sickens me to know that a child in grade school can recognize a blatant civil rights abuse, while 5 full-grown adults are greenlighting that same abuse today. I know this administration continues to try to rewrite history and erase the awful and racist actions of the past, but that doesn't make them any less real. What's next? Are they going to start rounding up trans people like myself to make sure we don't infect the general public with our unnatural transness? I understand that sounds like an exaggeration or something that would never happen, but I would have said the same thing about what is going on in this country today with our treatment of brown and black Americans and immigrants. Please, the state absolutely must step up and stop these concentration camps from happening.

I've said it before and I'll continue to say it until our country stops the unchecked inhumane treatment of immigrants, minorities, and people experiencing homelessness. This isn't about right or left. It's about RIGHT and WRONG. It's about basic morality. Maryland can continue to set an example for the rest of the country in the fight for immigrants' rights and basic humanity. Let's show the rest of the country exactly what values and rights we hold dear. Let's take a stand against this increasingly blatantly racist government agenda. For this reason, I urge you to please issue a favorable report on HB 1018.

Thank you for your time and consideration.