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**SB 850 - SUPPORT
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES - IMMIGRATION DETENTION -
PROHIBITION (DIGNITY NOT DETENTION ACT)**

Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 26, 2020

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Baltimore Washington Conference Immigration Task Force is writing in support of SB850. The Baltimore Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church is made up of 530 churches in Maryland, and approximately 100 more in surrounding areas. We are a people who believe deeply in scripture and want our faith to guide us as we wrestle with difficult issues such as immigration.

Our churches serve diverse communities. Some of those communities have seen the impact of immigrant detention facilities in their own back yard. “Raids of workplaces, homes, and other social places have often violated the civil liberties of migrants... Due to these raids and the ensuing detentions and deportations that follow them, families have been ripped apart and the migrant community has been forced to live in a constant state of fear” Our faith teaches us that “Throughout Scripture the people of God are called to love sojourners in our midst, treating them ‘as if they were one of your citizens’ and loving them as we do ourselves (Leviticus 19:33-34 NRSV)”. Therefore, the United Methodist Church affirms the worth, dignity, and inherent value and rights of all persons regardless of their nationality or legal status.” *2016 Book of Resolutions, #3281, "Welcoming the Migrant to the US"*.

We support this bill because it is what our faith calls us to do. Our Social Principles state that “...We oppose immigration policies that separate family members from each other or that include detention of families with children, and we call on local churches to be in ministry with immigrant families.” (*2016 Book of Discipline, Social Principles ¶162.H*) Further, as a denomination we call for the, “elimination of for-profit detention centers; and, “the elimination of indefinite detention, incarceration of children, and the expanding prison population, which also benefits privately owned detention centers and prisons;” (*2016 Book of Resolutions, #3281, "Welcoming the Migrant to the US"*).

We urge a favorable report on SB 850.