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Patrick Moran - President

Testimony

SB 850 – Correctional Services - Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

Judicial Proceedings

February 26, 2020

Support

AFSCME Council 3 strongly supports SB 850. This legislation would end the ability of state and local governments to engage with private contractors to establish detention facilities. It would also call for any existing local contracts with private detention companies to be terminated by June 2020. Finally, it would ensure that the public is adequately informed if any plans should surface for the construction or establishment of a new detention facility.

AFSCME Council 3 represents correctional officers in our state's prisons. Admittedly we regularly butt heads with management over staffing, wages and working conditions. All too often the issues we discuss with management have direct, negative impacts and consequences on the safety of staff and inmates if they go unresolved. Lack of appropriate levels of staffing harm the ability to implement and maintain ongoing education and rehabilitation programs.

HOWEVER, we can and do engage with management, raise these issues and alert the public by blowing the whistle on poor conditions when they exist. For privatized prisons and for-profit detention facilities, there are no whistleblowers, no public servants that look to serve their community with dignity and respect for the lives of others. The bottom line is the last line on the profit ledger: is it big enough? If not, what more can be cut back and squeezed out of employees and programs to enhance that profit?

For-profit imprisonment and detention are among the most immoral institutions imaginable – there is no goal of adjudication, or rehabilitation and societal reincorporation. It's all about the money. AFSCME Council 3 asks for a moral, favorable report of this legislation.

Every AFSCME Maryland State and University contract guarantees a right to union representation.
An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
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