



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair  
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Vice Chair  
Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

RE: HB677 Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

### **The MLLC supports HB677 Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act).**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation which improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a voice in the development of public policy affecting the Latino community and the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB677.

Private prison contractors have noted the major profit from detaining immigrants for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE and private prison companies are exploiting immigrant communities, largely who are Latino, and targeting towns that need additional revenue. ICE is using millions of tax-payer dollars to fund private companies to detain immigrants. According to 2017 ICE data, about 71% of immigrants who are detained are in a private detention facility and without a doubt these numbers are rising. The detention process has been deteriorated to dehumanizing and profit-driven levels that treat people as commodities rather than human beings.

As a result of their bottom-line priority, these companies are not compelled to maintain healthy and safe environments for detained immigrants. Nor do they have to because many are granted federal waivers that exempt them from complying with federal performance standards. Private prison companies would rather invest in more beds than in adequate food and medical care. Throughout the nation, there have been many reports of abuse, sexual assault, and even deaths in these centers.

HB677 prohibits the State or any local jurisdictions from creating new ICE contracts with private immigrant detention companies and phases out existing contracts. Maryland must act to stop the commercialization of family separations and incarceration. We stand by our commitment of supporting our vulnerable immigrant populations.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB677.