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Testimony in Support of HB677
Correctional Services-Immigration Detention-Prohibition
(Dignity Not Detention Act)

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Zackary Berger, M.D., Ph.D.

My name is Zackary Berger and I am a primary care physician in Baltimore, Maryland, living in District 43. This testimony is in support of HB677, the Dignity not Detention Act.

I treat undocumented immigrants both at Johns Hopkins and at the Esperanza Center. I am also a neighbor of immigrants. My patients, fellow Baltimoreans, and neighbors, live in constant dread of deportation. For Maryland to be a humane state, a welcoming state that delights in the diversity and talent of all its inhabitants, it must forbid the deadly, cruel contracts that constitute state government's complicity with currently fascist immigration policy.

Private contracts to imprison immigrants, as well as intergovernmental service agreements, short-circuit humanity and equate rule of law to an unfeeling nativism. My patients live in terror of nativist thugs wearing government uniforms, and our state authorities should in no way cooperate with this. I thank the House of Delegates for considering this important and clearly written bill which will benefit all inhabitants of Maryland, and bring some measure of comfort to the souls of those who care for immigrants in any capacity.

I respectfully urge a favorable report for HB677.