

**Veronica Gasca, Blanca Gasca**  
**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB16**

Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)  
Judiciary Committee

February 10, 2021

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Committee,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share our experience. Our names are Veronica Gasca and Blanca Gasca. We are system from immigrated here from Mexico. We are both mothers of two and three children. We have a little family business in Baltimore called "Gasca Fiesta Renta". We have always had to support each other since we arrived in the country 15 years ago.

We were only 11 and 13 years old when we came to this county to reunite with our father. But the day that we arrived at the airport, we were told that our father was detained by immigration on his way to work. We were only kids and we left alone and with the burden of also taking care of our younger siblings who were only 7 and 9 years old. To take care of them, we sacrificed the opportunity to study and managed to find work. Not knowing the language and not knowing our rights, we lived in fear of calling the police for help and one day found ourselves homeless. It was very difficult but nothing was impossible.

Now, we, thanks to CASA, have learned more about our rights and how to fight for our community. We are here today because we have experienced how detention can impact families and we ask you to pass the Dignity Not Detention Act so that families can stay together. It is very difficult for children to make it when a parent is in detention. We know because it happened to us.

We ask that the committee please vote yes to HB16.

Veronica Gasca, Blanca Gasca  
Dundalk, Maryland