



Maryland Alliance for
Racial Equity in Education

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB16

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

March 3, 2021

Dear Honorable Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE) is pleased to provide favorable testimony for Senate Bill 478, Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition, or the Dignity Not Detention Act. MAREE is a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland's education system. Our coalition is in strong agreement that 1) Maryland's state and local participation in detaining immigrants on behalf of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) must end and 2) private ICE detention centers do not belong in Maryland. The detention of immigrants in Maryland has had an extraordinarily negative impact on Black and Latinx students across the state.

With hundreds of immigrants currently detained in Maryland, the number of impacted children is immeasurable. The significant adverse emotional, developmental, educational, and mental outcomes that children face as a result of being detained or having a parent or family member incarcerated is well documentedⁱ. Studies show that a family's income drops on average by 70 percent within six months of a parent's immigration-related arrest, detention, or deportationⁱⁱ. From the loss of income of a detained parent or provider to the everyday stress of having a family member detained, an impacted student's education and overall health are put at risk. The consequences of ICE detention become drastically more severe for students during the pandemic when you consider the various other factors such as the digital divide, housing inequity, etc. – that disproportionately impact students of color.

While we understand the financial hardship that counties face right now, we cannot profit off detained immigrants to maintain our communities. We remain uncompromising in our belief that no person, county, state, or contractor should profit off of the incarceration of human beings. If Maryland continues to allow local detention partnerships with ICE and allows ICE to build private prisons in the state – it sends a clear message to our immigrant children that immigrants should be treated as profit. We cannot allow the separation of immigrant families through detention to continue – especially with the financial incentives that drive unfair targeting of immigrants of color. As we reimagine our public school system through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and other key legislation, we must also consider how deeply connected our students are to ICE detention and the impacts outlined above.

For these reasons, MAREE strongly urges a favorable report on House Bill 16.

ⁱ <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/us-citizen-children-impacted-immigration-enforcement>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/deferred-action-unauthorized-immigrant-parents-analysis-dapas-potential-effects-families>