

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the CASA de Maryland. I am a resident of MD District 42A. I live with an immigrant family and have

worked with many immigrants in the food industry. Whether they were here legally or not, I do not know. I do know that they all worked harder and longer hours than I did to support family back home and build a better life here. I care deeply about them, which is why I am testifying **in support of House Bill 16, the Dignity Not Detention Act.**



ICE has a long-documented history of unsafe housing conditions, including insufficient medical care. In 2020, some of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks occurred in immigration detention centers, including nearly 90% of detainees infected in Farmville, Virginia. ICE detainees are more than 13 times likely to contract COVID-19 as the general public.

In addition, private, for-profit prisons are motivated by cutting costs — like medical staffing and other contracted staffing. They are also financially motivated to increase the number of detainees. In a system where people equals profit, cost-cutting and overcrowding lead to poor conditions for detainees, **many which have no criminal background** and are being held to await a civil immigration trial.

Counties like Howard, Frederick, and Worcester bring in hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars from renting their bed space to ICE. This further incentivizes detention. **Our government should not be profiting off the unjust treatment of Maryland residents.**

This bill will stop ICE from detaining immigrants in Maryland, and ensure that local governments do not profit off the detention of immigrants. **This is an important step in ending mass incarceration and dismantling the private prison industry in Maryland.**

Maryland must not be complicit in the separation of families, the forced expulsion of people from their homes, and the dissolution of communities. A government that profits off of misery has every reason to reinforce that misery.

It is for all these reasons that I urge you to vote in **support of the Dignity Not Detention Act (House Bill 16)**. Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Christina Simmons
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

