



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of HB 16 - Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

To: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Robert Cullen, Immigration Task Force,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Date: March 3, 2021

I strongly support the Dignity Not Detention Act (HB 16). This bill is a critically needed measure that, if passed by the Maryland General Assembly and signed into law by the governor, would help reduce widespread exploitation of the incarceration and hardships of immigrants here in Maryland.

Detention facilities here in Free State have too often become high-risk and even deadly places for immigrants. In many cases, immigrants have been incarcerated at those locations for civil violations only. As detainees, these individuals have been inhumanely subjected to everything from a disproportionate number of strip searches to abysmal medical services.

Our state can do better, must do better, to ensure that the rights of immigrants among us are not trampled on and that these individuals are likewise given the safe and equitable treatment that we all deserve. As far as this social justice priority is concerned, HB 16 is not a panacea; it is a vital step in the right direction, however.

So please search your hearts, embrace the public good, and vote in favor of HB 16. Thank you for giving this crucial bill your fullest and fairest consideration.

Sincerely,

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