

HB 16 – SUPPORT

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Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

House Judiciary Committee

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Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing in support of HB 16, Dignity not Detention. I was born in Maryland and have lived my entire life here. I have worked in Maryland both as an RN and then as a Nurse Practitioner.

I have also visited detainees in detention centers and I know, as an eye witnesses, that there is no healthy amount of time for an immigrant to be detained. Immigration detention centers are hazardous places for both the immigrants and their families.

This issue has taken on a heightened sense of urgency as we face a worsening pandemic. Serious illnesses and deaths due to COVID continue to rise inside the detention centers, not only for the detained immigrant but also for the staff at these facilities. All of these deaths are preventable and would not happen were these detention centers to close down.

In addition, family members suffer when their fathers and husbands are picked up by ICE and locked up out of reach from their family members. Families lose their wage earners and children lose their fathers. These children can no longer concentrate in school and suffer a host of psychological consequences.

I urge the passage of Dignity not Detention so that families can stay together and be healthy together.

I urge a favorable report on HB 16.