



## **SB 478/HB 016 – SUPPORT**

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

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee/House Judiciary Committee

March 3, 2021

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Chapter of Doctors for Camp Closure strongly supports HB 16, the Dignity not Detention Act. We are part of the national Doctors for Camp Closure organization which is a non-partisan organization of over 2,200 physicians and health care professionals from all specialties who oppose inhumane detention of migrants and refugees who are attempting to enter the United States of America.

We know as eyewitnesses, that there is no healthy amount of time for an immigrant to be detained. We have been inside of immigration detention centers and we know how hazardous these places are both to 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 prisons, 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.

We are part of a national network where we write medical affidavits on behalf of detained immigrants. We review detention medical records and interview the detained immigrants. Many times they receive medical care that is substandard and often are denied lifesaving medical care. As more and more detainees get sick from COVID, we hear more and more frequently how detainees coughing, burning with fever and vomiting, simply do not receive medical care at all.

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.

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

D4CC urges a favorable report on HB 16.