

Hearing Date: March 3, 2021

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB16/SB478
Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Charles Herbert, and I live in Worcester County, Maryland. My wife and I have lived in Worcester County since 2005. Before that, I lived in Montgomery County for twenty-six years. I am a retired United States Government Employee of 40 years. I have family members that are immigrants but were lucky enough to be from a country that had a special status and we are all descended from immigrants. It is clear that the current immigration process is so tainted and enforced that we shouldn't support it.

When I first moved to the county, I read about the expansion of our jail facilities to allow Worcester County to handle ICE detainees. But gradually I understood that this effort of Worcester County to expand its Hospitality Industry was a part of the process that treats people as prisoners who aspire to be Americans. I think the Worcester County Jail is well run. But the use of jails in our society has been overdone. As poorly as the jails serve society, private prisons are substantially worse than government-run jails but it is clear that Maryland should join those states to stop using prisons as part of our immigration process.

I urge a favorable report on HB16.

Sincerely,

Charles Herbert