



ORHoCo Testimony on “Dignity not Detention” - HB16

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Vaughn Stewart

Committee: House Judiciary Committee

Organization Submitting: Our Revolution, Howard County, Maryland

Persons Submitting: Kathleen Uy and Paul J. Baicich

Position: Favorable

We are presenting this testimony on behalf of Our Revolution Howard County (ORHoCo), the county chapter of an organization inspired by the political and social messages of Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT). We fight for values and policies covering climate-change, health care, and economic and racial justice that focus on the needs of our neighbors, co-workers, and working families, particularly in this time of Covid.

Along with our 20+ partners represented by the Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice (HCCIJ), we present this in support of the Dignity not Detention Act (HB16) which will keep ICE from detaining immigrants in Maryland-and ensure that no local government or corporations are profiting off of the incarceration and suffering of immigrants.

This is particularly relevant in Howard County as the Howard County Detention Center has held immigrants on civil, not criminal violations. HCDC treatment of detainees violates human rights and ICE's own policies according to a recent Department of Homeland Security report. A prior report from 2014 detailed the same findings.

Despite the conclusions of both reports, detention center authorities have publicly stated that the detention center will continue to subject immigrants to strip-searching whenever “they” decide it is necessary. (This resulted in one detainee being strip-searched 13 times.)

It is long past time for Howard County and the state of Maryland to stop enforcing federal civil immigration laws. We ask that the bill HB16 be passed as written.

Please support “Dignity not Detention,” HB16, as written.

Thank you.

- Kathleen Uy, ORHoCo steering committee and representative to the HCCIJ
- Paul J. Baicich, ORHoCo Chair

***Our Revolution Howard County
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