



HB16

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Latino Racial Justice Circle
RE: Correctional Services- Immigration Detention-Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)
POSITION: SUPPORT

Founded in October 2015, the Latino Racial Justice Circle (LRJC) is a faith-based group of volunteers that seeks to create cross-cultural faith-based communities that work to eliminate racial injustice and discrimination against immigrants. Currently, we have about twenty active members who are residents of Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We have a program of legal assistance that provides financial aid for low-income immigrants in need of a private immigration attorney. Last year, our group provided funds to cover the costs of procuring an attorney to defend a transgender Honduran woman fleeing persecution in her home country in an asylum case. We were horrified to learn how she was forced to take medication without being informed of what the medicine did in a language that was easy for her to understand and how she was housed in unsafe conditions that put her life at risk during three months she was detained.

We are opposed to any new contracts or renewal of existing contracts with detention facilities in Maryland. We demand that the civil society be informed of plans for any new private detention facilities. Our tax dollars can have better use than incarcerating immigrants who are fleeing life-threatening conditions or our neighbors who have called Maryland home for years. It is expensive and immoral for our state and corporations to be profiting from the incarceration of immigrants who have not committed crimes or have a legitimate claim to asylum. We therefore urge Maryland legislators to support HB16.