

## Jeffrey A. Harrison

Date: March 1, 2021

Bill Title: Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

Bill Number: **HB 16**

Committee: Judiciary

Position: **Favorable / Support**

Contact: Delegate Stewart

Dear Committee Chair Clippinger, Committee Vice-Chair Atterbeary, and Committee Members:

I strongly support HB 16. Enforcement of federal immigration laws is the responsibility of the federal government. Our state and local governments in Maryland need to focus on state and local law enforcement and the delivery of governmental services to all Maryland residents. Marylanders demand that our state and local governments get out of the federal-immigration-law-enforcement business !

The use of incarceration in Maryland needs to be minimized. Incarceration as practiced in our country is inherently brutal and dehumanizing. Every person in the United States has constitutional rights. People who are alleged to have violated federal immigration laws should not be incarcerated in any facility in Maryland but instead need to be represented by an attorney and need to live in the community or with sponsors.

Making a profit from incarceration facilities, whether governmental or private, needs to be banned in Maryland. For-profit incarceration incentivizes more incarceration.

Immigration detention facilities are inhumane. More than 50 people have died in ICE and CBP facilities in the past four years. In those facilities, thousands of incarcerated people have been infected with Covid-19 because of overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and inadequate medical care. ICE, CBP, and their contractors have subjected incarcerated people to abuses and atrocities such as sexual assaults and forced hysterectomies. In-custody deaths and abuses continue in 2021.

Prison companies operate with little oversight and little accountability. One atrocious example in our region is Immigration Centers of America (ICA), which operates the ICE prison in Farmville, Virginia. As reported in 2020, nearly 90% of the incarcerated people at ICA Farmville, 259 of 298 people, tested positive for Covid-19. At least one ICA-Farmville-incarcerated person died in 2020. See References 1 and 2. ICA would like to build at least one more ICE prison in our region. Maryland must not support that !

For those reasons, I urge you to **support HB 16**.

Please send a **Favorable** report from the committee. Thank you.

Jeffrey A. Harrison

(a member of Greenbelt People Power)

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Reference 1: <https://prospect.org/justice/farmville-ice-facility-almost-every-detainee-has-coronavirus/>

Reference 2: <https://www.wric.com/news/virginia-news/farmville-ice-detention-center-needs-to-give-detainees-more-space-to-reduce-covid-19-risk-cdc-report-says/>