



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair  
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Vice Chair  
Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

DATE: March 3, 2021

RE: HB16 Correctional Services – Immigration Detention –  
Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

### **The MLLC supports HB16 Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act).**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB16.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) private detention centers are motivated by one thing: profits. ICE and private prison companies exploit immigrant communities, largely who are Latino, and target jurisdictions that may need extra revenue. This business approach of immigration is deceitful, dehumanizing, and as a result treats people as commodities. [2017 ICE data](#) suggests that about 71% of immigrants are detained in a privately run facility. In recent years, ICE focused on detaining all undocumented individuals, yet most detainees were [categorized](#) as “no threat” or “non-criminal.” Immigrants who are trying to build a better life for themselves and their family have a price over their heads.

Due to their bottom-line priority, private prison companies are also not compelled to maintain healthy and safe environments for detained immigrants. Nor do they have to because many are granted federal [waivers](#) that exempt them from complying with federal performance standards. Private prison companies would rather invest in more beds than in adequate food and medical care. Throughout the nation, there have been many [reports](#) of abuse, sexual assault, and even deaths in these centers. The legislature must rectify this gross, inhumane treatment of immigrants.

HB16 prohibits the State or any local jurisdictions from creating new ICE contracts with private detention companies and requires existing contracts to phase out by 2022. Maryland must stop the commercialization of family separations and incarceration. Families are being torn apart, lives are shaken and uprooted, and communities are instilled with fear because of greed. We stand with our vulnerable immigrant populations to end these ICE contracts.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB16.