



March 3, 2021

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
101 House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 16
(Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act))**

Dear Committee Chair Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

We of the Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity (BARS) are writing to you in support of HB 16 to ban any new contracts or renewals of existing contracts with detention facilities operated wholly (or in part by) private corporations, especially in context of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)'s existing agreements and contracts with local county jails in Maryland.

Formed in response to police brutality against Michael Brown and Freddie Gray in the winter of 2015, BARS brings together Asians and Pacific Islanders of all backgrounds in Baltimore to work in solidarity with our neighbors and the communities we share: Black, Indigenous, POC, LGBTQIA+, women, working class, disabled folks, incarcerated people, immigrants and refugees. We represent a justice-oriented Asian and Pacific Islander group in Baltimore, Maryland, including students, advocates, academics, workers, creatives, and more. Many of our members are first-generation immigrants, having moved to the U.S. from another country, are the children of immigrant parents, or have family members and close friends who have immigrated to the U.S. and call Maryland home.

It is our obligation to support HB16 because private detention centers are detrimental to immigrant communities, and lead to the increased incarceration of low-income, Black and POC Marylanders. ICE already has three immigration detention agreements with local county jails that allow counties to profit off the incarceration of detained immigrants. Counties like Howard, Frederick and Worcester collect revenue from renting their bed space to ICE - incentivizing the incarceration of immigrants. This bill is an important step toward ending mass incarceration and vital to making Maryland a safer place for immigrants. We urge the Maryland General Assembly to act swiftly to pass HB16, to ensure that no local governments or corporations are profiting off the incarceration and suffering of immigrants.

For more information about Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity or this position, please contact baltimoreasianresistanceinsolidarity@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity (BARS)