

**Written Testimony for: SB 0984 Correctional Services - Private Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement**  
**Government, Labor and Elections Committee**  
**Position: Favorable**

Submitted by Cathy Stogel

Dear Honorable Committee members.,

As a resident of Howard County I am writing to urge you to vote favorably on SB 0984: Correctional Services - Private Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement. The federal government is now using warehouses, industrial buildings, and other structures never intended to confine human beings for detention purposes.

Current loopholes in Maryland law allow new detention centers to be approved without the proper zoning requirements. The current administration has bypassed standard oversight and public notice to purchase warehouses that were never intended to house human beings, in total secrecy.

As you are aware, right here in Maryland DHS recently paid \$102.4 million for a Williamsport warehouse with no plumbing, electrical systems, or water infrastructure designed for human habitation. The sale was finalized without public notice. If not for the intervention of the Howard County council the same thing would have happened in Elkridge.

Adults and children are packed into these warehouses that are totally unsuitable for human beings. They do not comply with health and safety standards, including but not limited to no beds, no toilet/shower facilities, dirt and bugs, inedible food, lack of medical care (etc).

Is this what Maryland wants? We need to set standards of basic decency and health care and protect our residents.

This bill would prevent municipalities from approving the use of any building or structure for a detention facility unless certain zoning authorities apply.

I urge this committee to support SB 0984. Thank you,

Cathy Stogel  
Ellicott City