



Testimony on Senate Bill 984 – Favorable

SB984 Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

April 2, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of IndivisibleHoCoMD to offer favorable testimony in support of SB984 Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement.

Established in 2017 as part of the national Indivisible movement, IndivisibleHoCoMD has more than 1,800 members focused on making our state safe, equitable, and welcoming for all residents. There are 49 Indivisible groups in Maryland and over 2,500 nationwide.

SB984 will prohibit State and local government from approving the use of a facility owned by a private company as an immigration detention facility without appropriate local zoning.

In the last two years the number of immigrant detention facilities has increased markedly with multiple more sites planned nationwide. With virtually unlimited funds, ICE is purchasing and refurbishing private buildings and warehouses into large detention centers and processing facilities.

Many of these sites are purchased with little or no knowledge or involvement by the local communities and, as in Howard County, and with little regard to nearby schools, health care facilities, and residential communities. Also of concern is the absence of local infrastructure, particularly water and sewage capacity, to accommodate large numbers of detainees.

Allowing private detention centers in Maryland is antithetical to our state's values of inclusion and respect for all people. Any detention center sows fear and distrust in community. Private detention facilities, in particular, prioritize profit over healthy and humane treatment of detainees and are known to have worse living conditions and more violent incidents than public facilities. (<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/bja/181249.pdf>)

In 2025 ICE arrested over 3,300 people in Maryland, more than twice the number arrested in 2024. Only one-third of those arrested had any criminal convictions, and just over half had no criminal charges whatsoever. With private detention facilities in our state, it is inevitable that more innocent people, including US citizens, will be arrested. We cannot facilitate these actions in Maryland.

IndivisibleHoCoMD urges the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee to issue **a favorable report on SB984**.

Laurie Liskin, on behalf of IndivisibleHoCoMD
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