

Testimony: HB1017 – Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement
Hearing Date: February 12, 2026
Bill Sponsor: Delegate Wells
Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections
Submitting: Liz Feighner
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr and Committee

My name is Liz Feighner and I live in District 13, Howard County Maryland. I am writing in support of HB 1017 Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement.

As a resident of Howard County which recently found out about a warehouse being renovated to become ICE detention center, I fully support HC-1017. Thankfully, our county officials acted quickly to revoke the building permit and introduced legislation to prevent a private ICE detention center being built in Howard County in the future.

As a 2nd generation immigrant, I am against the way ICE is operating throughout the nation and I'm fully against private detention centers being used by ICE for profit.

ICE's illegal kidnapping actions has increased the number of detained immigrants and is increasingly turning to for-profit prison corporations and county jails. These for-profit prison corporations operate outside the purview of public oversight and accountability. Private companies, which are incentivized to cut medical staffing and deny care to maximize shareholder return, have maintained a particularly grisly track record of detainee abuse and neglect.

The Trump administration has also attempted to reduce oversight of detention facilities, as ICE is partnering with private companies to increase the nation's immigration detention capacity, The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) effectively eliminated the Office of the Immigration Ombudsman and the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, both of which performed critical oversight of immigration detention

Profiteering should have no place in any detention system. It is necessary to prevent these cruel detention centers from operating anywhere and especially here in Maryland.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on HB 1017.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Liz Feighner

Laurel, MD – District 13