

**Testimony Favorable to SB0984:
Correctional Services - Private Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement**

March 31, 2026

Delgate Melissa Wells, Chair, Delegate Kenneth Kerr, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. I am writing to you today because I am very concerned about the recent tactic of private entities (working with federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) building new construction or repurposing already existing structures for detention facilities. **I ask for a favorable report.**

SB0934 approaches this problem by limiting zoning, or changes to zoning districts - making it practically impossible to establish new detention structures.

The bil also expressly prohibits general government, public, or institutional uses from creating an immigration detainment facility, and describes the features of use and design that are designated as detention facilities.

In general, immigration detention facilities - whether privately or publicly owned - have inhumance conditions: overcrowding, lack of access to health care, and lack of access to legal representation. Immigration detention facilities near places of residence or other businesses intensify fear of being detained by people of color, who may not be immigrants or criminals.

I am proud of Maryland's creative strategies to limit the Trump administration's proliferation of immigration detention facilities.

For these reasons, **I request a favorable report for SB0984: Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement.**

Sincerely,
Ezra Towne
Wheaton, Maryland (District 18)