



SB984 – Correctional Services – Private Immigration Detention Facilities – Zoning
Position: Favorable

April 2, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Cc: Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Chair Wells and members of the Committee,

Economic Action Maryland Fund urges a favorable report on SB984, which prohibits privately owned detention centers from being constructed on property that is not clearly and explicitly zoned for these holding centers. **We understand there may be ongoing discussions around the provisions of HB1018, which passed this committee, and support any amendments that would strengthen or expand the scope of this legislation.**

Through our tenant and older adult direct service programs, Economic Action Maryland Fund serves immigrant clients and communities.

As advocates for the safety and civil rights of the immigrant community, we are concerned with the deplorable conditions in the facilities in which these individuals would be held. Privately owned for-profit companies should be held to strict zoning standards that prevent weaponizing our communities against our immigrant neighbors.

Exploitative corporations attempting to build these facilities will bolster ICE presence in Maryland while taking advantage of zoning language. SB984 prevents these entities from infiltrating our homes and of our community.

Privately run immigration detention centers in Maryland should be met with responsible use standards which require construction only on property which has been specifically zoned for their use.

At its core, SB984 is about upholding Maryland's values - fairness, dignity, and justice for all. This bill affirms that our state should not undermine zoning regulations and allow the building of privately owned detention centers to go unchecked. Economic Action Maryland stands in strong support of SB984 and its efforts to uphold State regulations while protecting Maryland's immigrant community.

Sincerely, Marceline White, Executive Director

Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

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