

Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable

SB0985: Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Minimum Mandatory Standards

Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 10, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Mary Anne Newkirk** and I am a resident of **Howard County, MD**. I strongly urge the committee to pass SB0985.

This bill seeks to codify common-sense guardrails on the operation of detention centers and correctional facilities. Given reports of [human rights abuses](#) and [disease outbreaks](#) at the Fallon Center in Baltimore, where a hundred or more immigrants are crammed into tight spaces with no access to clean water or sanitary facilities, there is a clear need for laws that enforce basic health and safety standards on the operation of these facilities.

The companies that operate these facilities have a lot to gain by cutting corners on health and safety. [CoreCivic](#) and [Geo Group](#) will rake in \$1B in revenue from government contracts this year alone and their leaders consider the expansion of mass deportation in the United States “[one of the most exciting periods](#),” due to the windfalls they stand to receive. Their goal is to create these detention centers as quickly as possible. In the absence of humane and enforceable standards for health and safety, the result is [scarce regard for how the centers treat human beings being detained or incarcerated inside their facilities](#).

We don't live in a police state. We must stand up and say “no” to ICE and its police state tactics. We must not make it easy for companies to make a fast buck at the expense of the dignity of human beings.

Maryland has an obligation to implement laws that protect the health and safety of all human beings, including those who are detained or incarcerated. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0985.

Thank you,
Mary Anne Newkirk
21044