

Testimony on SB0984: Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention
Facilities
- Zoning Requirement
Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 12, 2026

Position: **Favorable**

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

My name is Marcia Coe and I am a resident of Leonardtown, MD. I strongly urge the
committee to pass SB0984.

I support SB0984 because loopholes in current Maryland law allow municipalities to
approve new detention centers without the proper zoning requirements. As a result,
municipalities such as Washington County have sanctioned the use of warehouses
constructed to handle commodities to detain human beings, without regard to
whether there is sufficient infrastructure to safely and humanely do so.

Given the human rights abuses documented 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, and reports that DHS's plans to use a Washington
County warehouse as a detention camp are moving forward despite a lack of
transparency and community input, there is a clear need to develop laws that will
require municipalities to conduct greater oversight on immigration detention
facilities in our state. The warehouse in Williamsport is situated in an area of
Washington County that is not zoned for overnight habitation, creating a direct
conflict between DHS and local laws. Despite this, Washington County officials say
that they cannot require the federal government to follow local zoning laws.

Federal immigration officials are moving rapidly to expand their campaign of mass
deportation and private sellers, such as the one that sold the Williamsport
warehouse to DHS, have an interest in selling their operations as quickly as possible.
But the way land is zoned for new detention centers in Maryland communities
should be considered carefully and according to standards that protect human
rights, safety, and the environment.

This bill seeks to strengthen Maryland's stance on zoning requirements for
correctional facilities and provides recourse for violations of state law.

Maryland has an obligation to implement laws that protect the health and safety of
all human beings, especially those who are detained or incarcerated
I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0984.

Thank you,
Marcia D. Coe, MD