

**Testimony on Senate Bill 984 - Favorable
Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities -
Zoning Requirement**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Hearing date March 12, 2026**

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

My name is Laura Atwood, and I've lived in Silver Spring (D20) since 1999. I am writing in support of **SB984**.

In quickly and massively increasing immigrant detention, the federal government and some local partners are taking short-cuts around crucial legal safeguards. Environmental reviews, resource assessments, and public notification have been plowed through in the case of a detention warehouse near Hagerstown, Maryland.

Zoning falls in the hands of localities and encompasses many of the above concerns-- e.g., if a building is zoned as a warehouse, it's not meant to have extensive water and sewage needs, support heavy traffic, or put demands on an already-strained local healthcare infrastructure. To zone something as a detention facility (intended to incarcerate 1500 human beings, plus accommodate staff and others) requires consideration of these factors, along with the safeguards and public weigh-in that all zoning decisions require.

Just as kids don't belong in cages, their parents don't belong in warehouses.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report on SB984**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.