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Testimony in support of Senate Bill 984

Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement

To: Hon. William Smith, Jr., chair, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Jerry Kickenson, Treasurer and Montgomery County Coordinator, Congregation Action Network

Date: March 10, 2026

We are writing in **support of Senate Bill 984, Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement**, on behalf of the Congregation Action Network (CAN). The Congregation Action Network is a network of faith communities in Washington, DC, and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs acting in solidarity to end detention, deportation, profiling, and criminalization of immigrants and demanding and upholding justice, dignity, safety, and family unity. With congregations and members throughout the capital area, including congregations with hundreds of members in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, we live our faith in advocacy for and solidarity with our immigrant neighbors.

We wish to thank Chairman Smith for sponsoring Senate Bill 985.

As people of faith committed to justice and compassion for immigrants, we adhere to the sacred texts of most major faiths that call for welcoming the stranger and treating each other with love, dignity, respect, and compassion. We believe in liberation and that immigrant families should be treated fairly and have the same protections as all Maryland residents.

SB984 will prohibit the state and local governments from approving the use of a building or other structure as an immigration detention facility unless it is explicitly zoned for such use.

Immigrant communities in Maryland are scared, and with good reason. Our member congregations are either directly or indirectly impacted by the current civil immigration enforcement onslaught. While we believe that individuals charged with non-violent civil immigration offenses should not be detained at all, and immigration detention facilities have no place in Maryland, if an immigration detention facility is going to be approved in Maryland, the least the approving authority can do is openly and explicitly approve this use.

The Congregation Action Network respectfully urges you to reach a **favorable** report for SB984.

Respectfully yours,

Jerry Kickenson

Treasurer and Montgomery County Coordinator, Congregation Action Network

Silver Spring, MD