

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

Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 10, 2026

Position: Favorable

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

My name is Rhys Frazier and I am a resident of Sabillasville, MD. I strongly urge the committee to pass SB0985.

This bill would require basic health and human safety standards be met across detention centers and correctional facilities. Given reports of human rights abuse and an outbreak of preventable bacterial infections at the Fallon Center in Baltimore, where a hundred or more human beings 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 private companies that operate these facilities stand to make material financial gains by neglecting basic health and safety needs of the people they imprison. CoreCivic and Geo Group will make \$1B in revenue from government contracts this year alone. CoreCivic CEO Damon Hininger has openly expressed enthusiasm for the expansion of mass deportation in the United States as “one of the most exciting periods” because of the increase in wealth he and his shareholders will receive. Their goal is to create these detention centers as quickly as possible, with as little expense as possible, because this is a business to them. They do not consider their inmates to be human beings with needs or basic rights or dignity, as clearly demonstrated by Todd Lyon's statements comparing the humans being detained by ICE to Amazon packages. In the absence of humane and enforceable standards for health and safety, those that can't even acknowledge their prisoners as people subject inmates to abhorrent conditions in the name of profit.

I could acknowledge that American citizens are being imprisoned without due process, ripped from their homes or cars or neighborhood sidewalks and given no opportunity to show their identification. I could acknowledge that immigration violations are most often civil and not criminal offenses. I could mention the children who have been separated from their families. But I shouldn't need to rely on citizenship status, the comparative severity of an infraction, or the shattered innocence of affected kids to carry the point that these are human beings, with all of the complexity, hopes, fears, needs, and aspirations that come with it. These folks rode with us on the bus. They smiled at us when we passed each other on hiking trails. They thanked us when we held a door open for them because they were pushing a stroller. They had their favorite morning drink in the mug with their kid's kindergarten art on it. They share a million tiny points of connection with me and with every member of this committee, a kinship that should run so much deeper than the superficiality of skin color, accent, citizenship status, or even their past crimes. We are all just human beings doing our best with the hand we've been dealt, and it is absolutely disgusting that the heads of private prison systems are allowed to deny the humanity of their prisoners to profit from their suffering.

Maryland has an obligation to implement laws that protect the health and safety of all human beings, especially those in populations vulnerable to mistreatment like detainees and inmates. In the name of basic human decency, I respectfully urge a favorable report on [SB0985](#).

Thank you,

[Rhys Frazier](#)