

SB0984- FAV

Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement

Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 10, 2026

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I strongly urge the committee to pass SB0984.

Current Maryland law allows municipalities to approve new detention centers without the proper zoning requirements. As a result, County leaders in Washington County have sanctioned the use of warehouses to detain human beings, without regard to whether there is sufficient infrastructure to safely and humanely do so. Additionally, stresses on infrastructure such as water and sewer could result in insufficient utility services for residents in the area.

DHS's plans to use a Washington County warehouse as a detention camp are moving forward despite a lack of transparency and community input. County officials did not permit public comments in opposition to the plans. Greater oversight is urgently needed on immigration detention facilities in our state. SB0984 seeks to strengthen Maryland's stance on zoning requirements for correctional facilities and provides recourse for violations of state law.

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. 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,

Maryrose Wilson

12102 Coppermine Road Union Bridge MD 21791