

**Testimony on Senate Bill 0984 – Favorable**  
**SB0984 - Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement**

**March 10, 2026**

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Murphy, and I am a resident of District 46 in Baltimore, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0984 - Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement.

I strongly urge the State Senate to pass SB0984 because the federal government is using warehouses, industrial buildings, and other structures never intended to confine human beings for detention, with little to no public input—and loopholes in current Maryland law allow these new detention centers to be approved without the proper zoning requirements. SB 0984 draws a simple and necessary line: if the State or its partners are going to detain people, those facilities must be expressly authorized through local zoning processes, not slipped in under vague or generic land-use categories.

In Maryland, DHS recently paid \$102.4 million for a Williamsport warehouse with no plumbing, electrical systems, or water infrastructure designed for human habitation. The sale was finalized without public notice. The same thing nearly happened in Elkridge before the county council intervened.

We know the reality of these “warehouses” based on the harrowing accounts of DHS’s human rights abuses across the country, including children subjected to conditions resembling torture. At the Fallon building here in Baltimore, recently leaked video shows detainees packed shoulder-to-shoulder in rooms unfit for use.

SB0984 responds to efforts by this Administration to bypass standard oversight and public notice to purchase warehouses that were never intended to house human beings, in total secrecy. The bill would prevent municipalities from approving the use of any building or structure for a detention facility unless certain zoning authorities apply.

At a time when DHS is terrorizing communities across the country and trampling on basic human rights—Maryland must set a standard to uphold democratic principles and rule of law, and protect all those who reside here.

I respectfully urge this committee to support SB 0984 - Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Murphy  
District 46  
Baltimore, MD