

**TESTIMONY FOR SB0985 - Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Minimum
Mandatory Standards – Lorette Vetusi – 3/10/26**

Dear Members of the Maryland Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am very strongly in support of this bill which would start setting some guidelines and guardrails about how immigrant detention centers are being run. At the present time, we are experiencing a humanitarian crisis inside these detention centers, and our country should be embarrassed and mortified at the way immigrants are being treated! There have been numerous reports of horrific and hazardous conditions inside these detention camps including poor sanitation and ventilation, physical and sexual abuse, medical neglect and the spread of contagious diseases, intimidation to self-deport, inadequate supplies of food and hygiene products, violations of civil rights, and lack of access to legal counsel, services, and materials. People are held indefinitely, including some who are living in this country legally and should not have been arrested in the first place! Moreover, members of Congress who want to visit these facilities have often been denied access or have had to book advance appointments to do so, which prevents adequate oversight and transparency.

I consider this bill to be one of the most important pieces of legislation brought forth during the current legislative session. Although I would prefer to not have any federal immigration detention centers open for business in Maryland, I realize that is not possible at this time. So the next best thing we can do is to work to make sure that conditions improve in the centers that are operating in our state. Basic minimum standards need to be imposed, including but not limited to safety and security, food services, sanitation and ventilation, meeting the medical needs of detainees, protecting the individual rights of detainees, overcrowding issues, allowing victims of crimes committed inside the detention centers to file complaints and seek restitution, allowing unannounced inspections of these facilities to ensure that the mandated improvements are being made and maintained.

For these reasons, I strongly recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

Thank you for working on behalf of all Marylanders.

Sincerely,

Lorette Vetusi

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