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Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee
Testimony on: SB 984 - (Correctional Services - Private Immigration
Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement)
Organization: Individual
Person Submitting: Philippa Gasnier
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 12, 2026

Dear Chairman Smith and members of the committee,

I am writing in favor of SB-0984 (Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement), which will provide for enforcement of a ban on property being used for immigration detention when the property has not been zoned for such use.

We have seen the federal government rushing to create detention centers without regard for the zoning for such properties and contrary to the rights of the State and local jurisdictions to determine whether subject properties and surrounding areas are appropriate for a detention facility. The State and local jurisdictions need the ability to determine whether certain property would support all of the requirements of a detention center, including sewage, water, utilities, roadways, and be appropriate given other relevant considerations, including proximity to schools and residences and environmental concerns. Without the oversight of the State and local jurisdictions as to zoning and development of properties, the federal government has already shown a pattern of establishing detention centers which are unsupported by existing infrastructure and utilities availability, leading to safety, health and environmental standards so inadequate that many deaths have already occurred. Furthermore, such

facilities can strain and overwhelm the infrastructure and utilities available for already existing uses. The State and local jurisdictions have a strong interest in enforcing zoning and preventing these situations and Maryland must act now to provide for civil actions by the Attorney General for such enforcement.

I support SB-0984 as a critical measure and ask that you vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you,
Philippa Gasnier