

Testimony on House Bill – Favorable

SB985 Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Minimum Mandatory Standards

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 12, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

I, Lia Nigro, am writing to offer favorable testimony in support of **SB985- Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Minimum Mandatory Standards**

This bill is necessary because of an alarming disregard on the part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for the health and safety of the individuals that it detains prior to deportation.

A U.S. Senate investigation last year found dozens of cases of medical neglect, including detainees being denied insulin, waiting weeks for prescriptions, and suffering heart attacks after complaining of chest pain for days without treatment. DHS has now even stopped paying for outside medical services. Reports of inadequate or spoiled food as well as uncorrected health and sanitation code violations are common.

Furthermore, DHS is currently seeking space to hold detainees in facilities that are not designed for human habitation. If this is not halted in Maryland by other current legislation (as I hope it will be), close supervision and review will be necessary to try to ensure that ventilation, heating, water supply, light, etc. can be made adequate.

The Maryland Commission on Correctional Standards can apply experience to developing standards that rise above what we have been seeing. Their proposed expanded duties to seek out compliance, backed up by the Attorney General, are very necessary.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB985.