March 12, 2026

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Testimony in Support of SB984- Favorable
Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement

TO: Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Carol Stern

I am testifying in favor of SB984 as a resident of Montgomery County's District 16 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda.

My sacred text and tradition teach us to welcome the stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. Leviticus 19:34 explicitly instructs us to treat immigrants in our land the same as native citizens. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan wrote " teach us to respect the integrity of every human soul be it that of a friend or stranger, child or adult." When we are working to reform our immigration justice system, we must demand that it operates in accordance with these deeply held Jewish beliefs.

ICE detention centers have a well-documented history of severe, systemic abuses, including inadequate medical care, physical and sexual abuse, and the widespread use of solitary confinement. These facilities have been described as "barbaric," with reports of moldy or worm-infested food, lack of clean drinking water, continuous lighting that causes sleep deprivation, and extreme temperatures. This bill will help prevent ICE from running a deportation facility in Maryland. We want to ensure that none of Maryland's resources are used to help the federal deportation agenda. **By creating a zoning requirement and also authorizing the Attorney General to bring a civil action to enforce this law, there will be a way to impede these facilities from being built in Maryland at all.**

All Marylanders, regardless of immigration status, are entitled to equal protection under the law and deserve to be treated with human dignity. In the face of unprecedented attacks, our immigrant communities in Maryland along with CASA and other nonprofits are doing everything they can to protect families and to advocate for their communities. Maryland has the power to stop enabling Trump's cruel mass deportations and be a firewall against authoritarianism. This moment calls for action on the part of the State Legislature. **To protect justice and public safety for all Marylanders, please pass SB984 so that Maryland can do everything possible to prevent any ICE detention centers from being built here.**

<u>I respectfully urge a favorable report for SB984.</u>