

Hearing: March 12, 2026
Jo Shifrin
Bethesda, MD 20817

TESTIMONY ON SB# 984 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
**Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities -
Zoning Requirement**

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

FROM: Jo Shifrin

OPENING: My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 984, Correctional Services - Private Immigration Detention Facilities - Zoning Requirement.

I moved to Montgomery County in 2014 to be near my grandchildren. I'm a member of Adat Shalom, a Reconstructionist congregation in Bethesda. I try to live my life based on Jewish values. Among these values are *Tikkun Olam*, an obligation to make the world a more fair and equitable place for people to live; and *Dei Machsoro*, an obligation to make sure that everyone has what they need to live and thrive.

I support SB 984 because current Maryland law creates loopholes that allow private companies to obtain approvals on detention centers without the proper zoning requirements. Buildings that are utilized to warehouse goods are being bought throughout the United States to detain human beings without regard for whether they have the correct infrastructure to safely and humanely do so. Human rights abuses are already being seen at the Fallon Center in Baltimore, where a hundred or more immigrants are being crammed into tight spaces with no access to clean water or bathing facilities. There is a clear need to pass laws that will enforce basic health and safety standards on building operations used to detain people.

Private owners, like the one in Williamsport, Maryland, have an interest in selling their properties as quickly as possible. For health and safety reasons, facilities originally constructed to warehouse goods should not be repurposed into correctional facilities.

Maryland has an obligation to implement laws that protect the health and safety of all human beings, especially those who are detained or incarcerated.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 984.