

Testimony on Senate Bill-Favorable

SB 984 Correctional Services- Private Immigration Detention Facilities- Zoning Requirement

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee-March 10, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

I write in support of **SB-984** Correctional Services-Private Immigration Detention Facilities- Zoning Requirement.

This bill is necessary to protect State and local resources from being commandeered by the federal government to support its corrupt initiative to process, detain, and intimidate citizens and non-citizens alike. I believe it should apply to any non-governmental owned or operated facility.

Local zoning “ensures the orderly and sustainable growth of the County by integrating research and community engagement, and implementing policies, plans, and regulations that guide land use and development... [Zoning] facilitates the development of safe, healthy, equitable, connected, and sustained communities while respecting individual rights and protecting the counties natural environment, historical integrity, and character. “ [Planning & Zoning | Howard County](#). None of these objectives are achievable if the federal government may unilaterally place detention facilities of unlimited size and questionable operation in our communities.

A detention facility/processing center imposes a significant health, safety, and infrastructure burden on the community.

Health care for inmates is not wholly provided within the facility, but rather utilizes local hospital systems, already stressed, with ER wait times in Howard County, for example, reaching double digits. It is not uncommon for a primary care physician to direct patients to “avoid the ER” because of these wait times. I have personally experienced this phenomenon. Maryland has ER wait times longer than the national average and delayed discharge from hospitals due to shortage of community placements. [Emergency Department Wait Times Reduction Commission Interim Report 2025 HSCRC.pdf](#)

Correctional facilities present potential *environmental impacts and burdens on local sewer and water*. See, [Attorney General Brown Files Lawsuit to Stop Construction of Unlawful ICE Detention Facility in Washington County - News - Office of the Attorney General of Maryland](#) and Complaint cited therein.

Local education is impacted. Detention Facilities – especially those with capacities ranging from 1500-8500 as planned by DHS—require significant staffing levels, and those staff come with families who also need services, including education. PlannEsq.ing for and providing schools is a function delegated to counties in Maryland and requires detailed, researched based evaluation of infrastructure. [Adequate Public Facilities | Howard County](#).

Finally, by giving the Attorney General enforcement authority via civil action the Bill ensures accountability and meaningful remedies.

I urge a favorable report on SB 984. Margaret Ann Nolan, Esq. 21042