



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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The Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT** of **Senate Bill 0985**: Correctional Services – Immigration Detention Facilities – Minimum Mandatory Standards

Dear Chair Smith Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 0985, an impactful piece of legislation that establishes clear, concise, and enforceable minimum standards governing the care, custody, and conditions of individuals held in immigration detention facilities in Maryland.

As Howard County Executive, I wholeheartedly believe that **all individuals** – regardless of their immigration status, deserve to be treated with dignity, fairness, and basic human decency. SB 0985 does just that by upholding these core values and requiring the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services to adopt mandatory regulations that ensure consistent standards of care for civil detainees in immigration detention facilities.

Civil detainees are not serving criminal sentences. Yet, too often, the conditions under which they are confined to while awaiting their administrative proceedings resemble or fall below those of correctional institutions. SB0985 addresses this gap by establishing clear statewide standards that reflect the civil nature of immigration detention. By creating uniform expectations and clear lines of authority, we are assuring our community members that facilities operating in Maryland meet standards consistent with our shared values and commitment to humane treatment.

Moreover, in Howard County, we have long prioritized equity, human rights, and responsible governance. We understand that safeguarding the well-being of individuals in custody strengthens public trust in government institutions.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to **support SB0985** and show that Maryland's leadership is ensuring civil detention is conducted with accountability, compassion, and respect for human dignity, no matter one's status.

Respectfully,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive