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TESTIMONY FOR SB0985
Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Minimum Mandatory Standards

Bill Sponsor: Senator Smith
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Organization Submitting: Indivisible Bowie and Beyond (IBBMD)
Person Submitting: Liz Enagonio, co-founder
Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony **in favor of SB0985** on behalf of Indivisible Bowie and Beyond (IBBMD). IBBMD is a group of several hundred grassroots activists in Bowie and surrounding areas in Prince George's County, working to bring justice, equality, and people-centric legislation to Maryland.

IBBMD supports SB0985 because loopholes in current Maryland law permit municipalities to approve Immigrant Detention Centers without proper zoning requirements. In turn, this loophole leads to their ability to stick a Detention Center anywhere they can purchase property, including areas without access to sufficient water, utility service or access to medical care for people they incarcerate. We already see Washington County circumventing the Maryland ban on detention centers by sanctioning the use of a warehouse built for storage of goods as a detention center to house human beings. This warehouse is in an area of Washington County that is not zoned for overnight habitation. There is no plan for how DHS plans to humanely house hundreds or thousands of our FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS in a warehouse. DHS has yet to present a clear plan on how, in an area not zoned for housing human beings, it will provide basic necessities such as water and sanitation services for people it plans to incarcerate. DHS has not provided any plan for how they plan to provide adequate medical care for incarcerated fellow human beings in an area where medical systems are already strained caring for current residents.

We have already seen photos, videos, and heard first-person reports documenting the human rights abuses in the Fallon Center in Baltimore, where at least 100 FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS are crammed into tight spaces without access to clean water or sanitary facilities. Is this DHS's plan for bringing hundreds or thousands of people into Washington County against their will: just not provide services?

In no way should anyone condone creating concentration camps in Maryland, especially when state law expressly bans immigrant detention centers. The least we can do is require that any place where people are held, detained, or incarcerated meet basic human safety and health requirements. It's shameful we need to pass a law saying this, but we do.

For these reasons, IBBMD urges that you support SB0985 and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.