

Testimony on SB0985: Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Minimum Mandatory Standards

Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 10, 2026

Position: Favorable

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

My name is Karen Van Trieste and I am a resident of Easton, MD. I strongly urge your committee to pass SB0985 sponsored by Senator Smith.

This emergency bill will codify minimum mandatory standards governing the care, custody, and conditions of civil detainees in immigration detention facilities. Because the Department of Homeland Security currently is engaged in mass immigration detention and deportation efforts, passing this bill is urgent to ensure that the health and safety of immigrants who are detained in Maryland will be protected by state law.

There have been numerous reports of medical neglect, overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, inadequate sanitary facilities, disease outbreaks and even human rights abuses at Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities throughout the country. Here in Maryland, immigrants at the George Fallon Federal Building in Baltimore have been subjected to overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, lack of access to clean water and denial of medical care.

As a registered nurse, I am especially concerned about reports of communicable diseases, inadequate sleeping conditions and medical neglect that have occurred at immigration detention facilities. I am troubled by hearing stories of women who have been denied access to feminine hygiene products and bathroom facilities. Passage of SB0985 will help protect immigrants from neglect and abuse while they are in ICE facilities in our state.

Maryland has an obligation to implement laws that protect the health and safety of all human beings, including those who are detained or incarcerated. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable vote on SB0985.

Respectfully,

Karen Van Trieste