

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable  
SB 985 – Correctional Services – Immigration Detention Facilities –  
Minimum Mandatory Standards  
Judicial Proceedings Hearing  
March 12, 2026**

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

I am writing to urge you to issue a **favorable report on SB 985**. Washington County is allowing ICE to convert a warehouse into a detention facility. If the State of Maryland is unable to stop this process, then we must establish clear, enforceable standards for such a facility.

**SB 985** provides those critical protections. This bill:

- Establishes minimum safety and living standards.
- Ensures accountability and transparency.
- Empowers meaningful state oversight.
- Creates an enforcement mechanism.
- And protects local and state resources.

These safeguards are long overdue. The federal government has deliberately allowed conditions in detention facilities to become inhumane and degrading. This is not accidental—it is a strategy meant to pressure people into self-deportation by making it unbearable. Maryland must not be complicit in this approach. Before a detention facility operates in our communities, we must require strong safeguards that protect human dignity, public resources, and our state values. **SB 985** is a responsible and necessary step to ensure that Maryland upholds its values, protects vulnerable people, and asserts appropriate state oversight.

This issue is personal to me because a close loved one was wrongfully held as a prisoner of war in a reeducation camp. Holding pro-democracy beliefs and Catholic faith, he sought and was granted asylum in the United States. With that personal connection in mind, I feel strongly that we should not have roving patrols kidnapping and secreting community members, disregarding due process and the Constitutional Rights afforded to all *persons*, and concentrating them into camps on the basis of racial profiling, languages spoken, or quotas issued.

I also want to be clear that I do not believe individuals who are not violent criminals should be detained at all. The enormous amount of money being spent on immigration detention does not improve public safety and diverts resources away from what Marylanders actually need.

I urge you to **vote favorable on SB 985** and allow this bill to move forward to the full Senate

Thank you for your time and for your service. Sincerely,

Jean Montgomery, District 14 voter.