

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0984 – Correctional Services – Private Immigration Detention Facilities –**  
**Zoning Requirement**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**March 10, 2026**

**Position: Favorable**

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, My name is Marian Marbury and I am a resident of Baltimore MD. I strongly urge the committee to pass SB0984.

I support SB0984 because loopholes in current Maryland law allow municipalities to approve new detention centers without the proper zoning requirements. As a result, municipalities such as Washington County have [sanctioned](#) the use of warehouses constructed to handle commodities to detain human beings, without regard to whether there is [sufficient infrastructure to safely and humanely do so](#).

Given the [human rights abuses documented at the Fallon Center in Baltimore](#), where a hundred or more immigrants are crammed into tight spaces with no access to clean water or sanitary facilities, and reports that DHS's plans to use a Washington County warehouse as a detention camp are [moving forward despite a lack of transparency and community input](#), there is a clear need to develop laws that will require municipalities to conduct greater oversight on immigration detention facilities in our state.

The warehouse in Williamsport is situated in an area of Washington County that is [not zoned for overnight habitation](#), creating a direct conflict between DHS and local laws. Despite this, Washington County officials say that they cannot require the federal government to follow local zoning laws.

Federal immigration officials are moving rapidly to expand their campaign of mass deportation and private sellers, such as the one that sold the Williamsport warehouse to DHS, have an interest in selling their operations as quickly as possible. But the way land is zoned for new detention centers in Maryland communities should be considered carefully and according to standards that protect human rights, safety, and the environment.

Please consider what we have found out about the warehouse that ICE bought in Williamsport, MD. It has four toilets and two water fountains, and is allotted 800 gallons of water a day. Housing 1500 detainees will require a minimum of over 200,000 gallons a day and the current infrastructure is completely inadequate. Even if that much water can be found, the pipes aren't large enough to permit that increased waterflow. We already have seen that the ICE modus operandi is to act first and plan later. Therefore the likelihood that

basic health and safety will receive adequate attention unless forced to by this legislation is extremely low.

This bill seeks to strengthen Maryland's stance on zoning requirements for correctional facilities and provides recourse for violations of state law.

Maryland has an obligation to implement laws that protect the health and safety of all human beings, especially those who are detained or incarcerated. For the reasons stated in this testimony, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0984.

Thank you,

Marian Marbury