

Bill Title: HB630 Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Judiciary Committee

From: Jane E. Dennison

Date: March 9, 2026

Dear Chair Bartlett and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jane Dennison. I am a resident of Frederick in Frederick County. I submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 630, which would prohibit the operation of immigration detention facilities in buildings not originally designed and constructed for housing or detaining people.

Detaining individuals in retrofitted warehouses or similar structures is both unsafe and inhumane. These spaces cannot meet basic standards of care and converting them for detention would strain local infrastructure—including water, sewage, and emergency services—that is already limited in many Maryland communities.

It is also clear that federal policy is increasingly prioritizing mass detention over humane treatment and due process. Maryland must protect the constitutional rights of all residents and resist pressure from federal agencies or private interests seeking to expand large-scale detention in our state.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency are increasingly acting as though they are above the law. In Maryland, ICE officers are indiscriminately grabbing people off streets and using force against people who don't pose a threat. Immigrants with lawful status—and even U.S. citizens—are being detained. For example, a family friend recently shared a deeply troubling experience: her employee's son, a U.S.-born Maryland resident, was pulled over while driving, told that he did not "look American," and taken to an ICE detention facility. ICE refused to release him until his mother personally delivered his original birth certificate and passport to the facility. This kind of conduct is unacceptable and should not be tolerated in our state!

Expanding detention capacity in Maryland will only increase the likelihood of such abuses. House Bill 630 is a necessary safeguard to prevent unsafe facilities, protect Maryland communities, and uphold the rights and dignity of all people in our state. I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Jane Dennison