

**Testimony on HB630 - Favorable**  
Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and  
Construction  
House Judiciary Committee

Hearing date: March 9, 2026

From: Laura Atwood, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Chair Bartlett, Vice-Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing a **favorable** testimony in support of HB630. This bill would address a loophole in current law, Dignity Not Detention, which stated clearly: Maryland does not believe in locking up immigrant members of our community for immigration violations (which are civil offenses). We value and support our loved ones, friends, neighbors, colleagues.

This bill also reaffirms basic human dignities. Just as children do not belong in cages, their parents do not belong in converted warehouses.

A core value that guides my work in healthcare (as an inpatient physical therapist), my activism, and my family roles is a deep belief in our shared humanity. Among the most dehumanizing things you can do to someone is to lock them up. Privacy and basic choices (what to wear, what to eat, who to spend time with) are denied. Medical neglect, violence, and human rights violations are endemic. People who are detained can no longer provide for their families as breadwinners and/or caregivers, and can no longer contribute to their communities as workers and volunteers (in churches, schools, community sports leagues, and more). And detention is a form of family separation; over 5 million U.S. citizen children live with at least one family member who is undocumented, and after a raid or arrest, the majority of children display multiple behavioral changes as their family is thrown into turmoil. As a country, what are we doing?!

“Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”: these are severely threatened when someone is behind bars.

For these and many other reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on HB630.

Thank you for your time and consideration.