

TESTIMONY

Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction, HB0630
Public Hearing March 11, 2026

Chair J. Sandy Bartlett and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to support HB0630, Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction.

The current federal administration has gone far beyond detaining “. . . the worst of the worst” of the immigrants in our country. Even United States citizens are routinely abducted and detained based solely on their appearance.

The conditions of the Department of Homeland Security’s facilities for detainees are widely reported to be substandard. Each time a member of Congress visits DHS facilities, they report crowded areas, the lack of adequate medical provisions, moldy food being served, and few opportunities for personal hygiene.

As a result of routine overcrowding, DHS has been planning massive concentration camps throughout the county. Once passed into law, this bill will be able to mitigate the ability of DHS to establish concentration camps here in Maryland.

Many of the proposed concentration camps are to be located in existing warehouses. I am a retired water resources engineer with decades of experience planning water and sewer service for new development at the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. It is important to know that warehouse space uses far, far less water and produces far, far less wastewater per square foot than “guest quarters.” While I cannot speak to the amount of available capacity in Williamsport’s utility systems, I am positive that there is insufficient capacity for the proposed use.

Despite having larger space to house detainees, I am unconvinced that DHS has any interest in improving the conditions of its detainees. It appears that the cruelty of the poor conditions is the point: to encourage the detainees to self-deport. I see the massive concentration camps as a way for DHS to increase the number of detainees in substandard, cruel conditions.

As Marylanders, we are responsible for what takes place in our community. HB0630 will have the effect of limiting the number of detainees in our state. It is an important step in the right direction.

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