

HB0630_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

03/11/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#0630- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0630, Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction

This bill has become necessary as part of Maryland’s forceful response to the illegal and constitutional actions of DHS and ICE.

As reported by Maryland Matters on March 6, 2026, *State agencies blast ‘deeply flawed’ ICE detention site, lawmakers want ‘immediate halt’ to project - Letters question environmental impact, challenge transparency of process; follow lawsuit by state attorney general to block planned detention center*¹

“We have serious concerns that ICE is proceeding with this project in a secretive and rushed manner that will adversely impact the State,” said the letter signed by Natural Resources Secretary Josh Kurtz, Environment Secretary Serena McIlwain and acting Transportation Secretary Kathryn Thomson. The letter came in response to an [Early Notice and Public Review](#) posted to the DHS website last week — more than month after the Jan. 16 purchase of the property for \$102.4 million.

Kurtz, McIlwain and Thomson called the notice “deeply flawed” and said it “cannot paper over the significant procedural and substantive deficiencies with ICE’s decision to purchase the property for the purpose of converting it into a detention facility.” The letter also called on DHS to extend the public comment period by at least another 30 days.

The secretaries raised concerns about potential impacts that the site — which is in a 100- to 500-year floodplain — might have on nearby waterways and on wildlife, including state-listed endangered species in the area. They also cited the potential for damage to the community’s sewer lines and water infrastructure once the demand of a 1,500-bed facility is added to Williamsport, a town of just about 2,000 residents. But the letter said that due to the lack of transparency from DHS regarding the environmental impacts, engineering specifications and change in water and waste flow, “it is impossible to fully evaluate the impacts that this project will have on the State.”

¹ <https://marylandmatters.org/2026/03/06/state-agencies-blast-deeply-flawed-ice-detention-site-lawmakers-want-immediate-halt-to-project/>

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While legal action is being taken against this conversion of the warehouse and any establishment of a detention center Maryland can and should combat this disregard of the laws in Maryland and put a hard stop to these illegal actions.

ICE has shown itself totally incompetent and criminal in its operations of immigrant detention centers. Reports from 2025 and early 2026 describe "intolerable," "inhumane," and "dangerous" conditions within Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers, characterized by severe overcrowding, medical neglect, and, in some cases, physical abuse. As the administration moves to increase detention capacity to over 100,000 beds, detainees—including families and children—have reported filthy, overcrowded, and, at times, deadly environments.² These conditions have been documented by news reports and inspections conducted by various legislators.

This bill will accomplish this by prohibiting a person from operating an immigration detention facility at a building, structure, or facility that was not originally designed and constructed for the purpose of housing or detaining individuals.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#0630.

² Google AI Search "intolerable conditions in ice detention centers"