

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

FROM: Katherine J. Jones

My name is Katherine Jones and I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0630, Prohibiting the operation of 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 am very concerned about the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) retrofitting warehouses for the use of detaining individuals.

To convert a warehouse to safely and responsibly house anyone detained by the government for any length of time is merely a first step in an incredibly expensive process.

America does not create concentration camps of bunks lined up in huge empty spaces without proper heating and cooling. Most individuals detained by ICE or DHS are in civil proceedings, not criminal cases, yet they are often treated worse than individuals in criminal prisons. Detainees include children, the single most vulnerable population. We do not intermingle children with random adults in jails in America, even when children are guilty of crimes. Children should not be detained at all when they are not criminals.

Detainees are entitled to healthy housing. This requires adequate space for the safety of vulnerable detainees. There must be enough separation so that detainees can sleep in quiet and dark rooms for a reasonable time. There must be adequate cooking and eating space, showering and bathroom facilities. It is too expensive to modify a warehouse within a reasonable budget.

The government has not secured reasonable living conditions in any facility created in this manner. These facilities have been linked to overcrowding, poor medical care, and inadequate, sometimes

contaminated, food. The rapid, large-scale nature of these facilities increases the potential for abuse, including reports of sexual assault, suicide, and the rapid spreading of disease, resulting in 2025 being the deadliest year on record for ICE detention.

Converting large industrial buildings can overwhelm local water, sewer, and emergency services. As federal property, these warehouses are often exempt from local property taxes, depriving municipalities of funds for schools and public services.

Many of these facilities are managed by private companies incentivized to cut costs, which can jeopardize safety and care. The money spent on these facilities is a waste of resources that could be better used for community-based support services.

Instead of warehousing, we should create a robust infrastructure that monitors immigrants closely, allowing them to support themselves, rather than being supported by taxpayers, and contribute to our economy and community while they seek to become citizens. This is more cost-effective, humane, and ensures compliance with court appearances.

Thank you for your consideration.

Katherine J. Jones