

Monday, March 9, 2026

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am submitting testimony as a member of Sanctuary Maryland. I am testifying in **strong support of HB0630: Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction.**

President Trump's cruel, racist, and xenophobic attacks on immigrants have continued in his second administration. It is incumbent upon Maryland to protect the people that he is dedicated to demonizing: our friends, family members, and neighbors, hard-working people who help build our communities. They don't deserve to live in fear.

HB 0630 would prohibit operation of immigration detention facilities in buildings, structures, or facilities that were not originally designed and constructed for the purpose of housing or detaining individuals.

Many immigration detention facilities around the country have been hastily and sloppily constructed or retrofitted run by either the federal government or private companies. The requirement to respect the rights of the detained is in direct conflict with the profit motives of many of the companies running these facilities. This is *especially* likely when private companies are allowed to convert warehouses or other buildings not intended to house human beings into detention centers.

In 2025, conditions in immigration detention facilities horrifically declined, with "worsening and substandard medical care, growing complaints of abusive conditions, and documented extensive violations of detention standards."¹ These assaults on human dignity have tragically continued in 2026 as increasing demand for detention space continues to outstrip supply. We must prevent these abuses from being perpetuated in Maryland.

Recent moves by ICE to purchase and convert warehouses into detention facilities raise concerns that an ICE "surge" similar to what has occurred in Minneapolis may be planned for Maryland.² Our state has a duty to safeguard our immigrant neighbors, and that must

¹ Reichlin, Aaron. "New Report Details ICE's Expanding and Increasingly Unaccountable Detention System." American Immigration Council, 23 January 2026, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/ice-expanding-detention-system/>. Accessed 9 February 2026.

² Conarck, Ben, Zawodny, Daniel and Bologna, Giacomo. "Feds purchase warehouse near Hagerstown, fueling talk of immigration detention center." The Baltimore Banner, 27 January 2026.

include making all possible efforts to prevent the establishment of new detention centers that will fuel the ongoing terror campaign. Allowing such facilities to exist in our communities, alongside the schools, parks, and houses where people are trying to live their lives, furthers this fear and makes it even more constant.

The existence of these detention facilities flies in the face of the fact that all human beings have fundamental rights and dignities that must be respected. In addition to these fundamental rights, Maryland's large immigrant community makes up nearly a third of all Maryland healthcare support workers, a third of the state's building maintenance and groundskeepers, and supports a thriving and diverse small business community. In 2018, Maryland's immigrant communities were contributing \$8 billion in federal and \$4 billion in state taxes, providing \$2 billion in business revenue from entrepreneurship, and added tens of billions to Maryland's economy with their purchasing power³.

We are stronger when our immigrant communities feel safe and supported in our cities and state. Under this current political climate, protections are needed more now than ever. Without substantial legal protections in Maryland, the harm caused by the federal government's racist terror against immigrant communities will continue to affect us all, but unfortunately will especially and disproportionately impact Latino and Black communities. This bill is essential for keeping all Marylanders safe.

Finally, **I strongly support HB0630 on the basis of what this bill would communicate to immigrant Marylanders: that Maryland is a state where immigrants are welcome, supported, and treated as people with equal rights and protections to every other Marylander.** I am proud of our state's standing as a comparative safe haven for immigrants compared to many other states in the US, and in the strongest possible terms I believe it is imperative that we continue to do everything in our power, maximizing every possible legal mechanism, protect immigrants' rights in the state of Maryland.

We must stand up for our friends, family, and neighbors by refusing to be complicit in President Trump's xenophobia. It is for all of these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in **support of HB0630: Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
Baltimore, MD 21209

https://www.thebanner.com/politics-power/national-politics/federal-government-buys-hagerstown-warehouse-immigration-detention-VAHWF3IP5BGJPOLUTFKSKLWFBQ/?utm_content=bc_mr

³ [Immigrants in Maryland; American Immigration Council](#)