

Testimony on HB0630: Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction

Judiciary Committee

March 9, 2026

Position: Favorable

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christina M. Yuan, MD and I am a resident of Laurel, MD. I strongly urge the committee to pass HB0630.

I support HB0630 because current Maryland law creates loopholes that allow private companies to obtain approvals on detention centers without proper zoning. Buildings designed to house goods are being bought and retrofitted to detain human beings without proper infrastructure to safely and humanely do so. Given the human rights abuses we have seen at the Fallon Center in Baltimore, where a hundred or more immigrants are crammed into tight spaces without access to clean water, sanitary facilities, or health care, there is a clear need for the State of Maryland to develop laws that enforce basic health and safety standards on detainee building operations.

Private sellers, like the one in Williamsport, MD, have an interest in selling their operations as quickly as possible. For health and safety reasons, warehouses built to house goods or services should not be able to be repurposed into correctional facilities. The infrastructure requirements are completely different, and also severely impact the surrounding communities. This law aims to prohibit individuals from operating sites as correctional facilities when the original purpose of the site was not intended to be a correctional facility. They cannot safely and adequately provide sewage, water, solid waste removal, and medical services, as the local infrastructure originally needed/planned for was for a warehouse not a detention/correctional facility.

Maryland has an obligation to implement laws that protect the health and safety of all human beings—those who are detained or incarcerated and those in the surrounding community. These detention facilities will take away resources and increase costs for local residents, as well as treating human beings as “pallets of good”. For the reasons stated in this testimony, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB0630.

Thank you,

Christina M. Yuan, MD

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