

RE: HB0630 — Correctional Services – Immigration Detention Facilities – Original Design and Construction

Position: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: March 11, 2026

House Judiciary Committee

March 9, 2026

Dear Chair Bartlett and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Claire Connor, and I am from Hagerstown in Washington County, MD. I am writing as a lifelong resident of the state to express my unwavering support of HB0630.

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) sweeping, senseless, and overtly aggressive invasion of my hometown following its surreptitious acquisition of a \$102.4 million vacant, mega warehouse is disturbing and unwelcome in its entirety. The expressed intention of DHS to operate an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) "processing facility" at this location is more than just abhorrent—it is a blatant breach of the rule of law. DHS has skirted all accountability and navigated every loophole in an effort to evade the public and conceal what it knows to be wrong.

The agency failed to solicit public comment until such a time that the warehouse had already been purchased, meanwhile site improvements are actively taking place, despite an active lawsuit filed by Attorney General Anthony Brown. The actions of the current administration are reckless, wrong, and must be stopped. DHS has failed to recognize even the faintest of our community's concerns, which include but are not limited to:

- Environmental impact as it relates to runoff, water pollution, light pollution, trash disposal, etc.
- Strain on the existing public infrastructure, such as fresh water, sewer, public roads, cellular networks, etc.
- Strain on public service capacity, to include local law enforcement and medical facilities.
- Economic loss on account of lost property tax revenue, reduced tourism, lost commercial opportunity, etc.
- Humanitarian concerns related to detainees' quality of care, to include access to food, medicine, hygienic conditions, legal aid, recreation/enrichment, etc.
- Public safety concerns for undocumented immigrants and legal citizens alike, given what the entire world has watched transpire in Minneapolis.

This is unacceptable and unaligned with what our community wants for its future. ICE cannot be allowed to operate here. HB0630 must be passed.

HB0630 addresses a straightforward but vital principle: facilities used to detain human beings should have been designed and built for that purpose. When the government places

individuals—regardless of their immigration status—into warehouses, storage facilities, or other structures never intended for human confinement, it creates conditions far below the basic standards of humane detention.

The Constitution does not stop at the threshold of a detention facility. People held by the government retain fundamental rights, including protections against cruel and degrading conditions. Maryland has both the authority and the responsibility to ensure that immigration detention facilities operating on its soil meet minimum standards of habitability and design.

This is not a radical position. It is a common-sense application of the principle that human dignity must be respected by any government entity exercising custodial power. Converted warehouses and improvised detention sites are not adequate substitutes for facilities designed with the needs, safety, and rights of detained individuals in mind.

I urge the Committee to pass HB0630 favorably and send a clear message that Maryland will not permit the operation of substandard detention facilities within its borders. We are not complicit, and together we will fight this.

Thank you for your time and your service.

Respectfully,
Claire Connor, Hagerstown, Washington County