

February 16, 2026

Dear Chair and members of the Maryland House Judiciary Committee,

I am a concerned Maryland resident writing in support of House Bill 630, which would prevent buildings not constructed for human habitation from being used as detention centers.

To expand their program of mass deportation, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has stated it plans to use "non-traditional facilities" as detention centers. DHS has already acquired a warehouse in Williamsport, Maryland which it plans to convert into a detention center and has spent over \$600 million to acquire additional warehouses across the country.

Federal officials have stated publicly that the "prototype" for these new "large-scale holding facilities" is Camp East Montana at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas.

Human rights violations and public health hazards have been widely documented at Camp East Montana, many of which stem from its makeshift nature and hasty construction. According to ICE's own inspectors, Camp East Montana violated at least 60 federal standards for immigrant detention, including failing to monitor and treat detainees' medical conditions and depriving them of opportunities to contact lawyers or learn about their cases or file complaints, the *Washington Post* reports. The ACLU has reported cases of physical and sexual abuse and intimidation to self-deport at the camp. As of January 2026, three detainees at Camp East Montana have died, including one as a result of homicide, according to medical examiners. Poor sanitation has led to outbreaks of tuberculosis and Covid-19.

Makeshift detention facilities here in Maryland appear to be operated with similar disregard for basic standards of health, safety, and human rights. A recently leaked video from inside the Fallon building, an office building that ICE uses to detain people, shows detainees packed shoulder-to-shoulder, with limited access to showers and toilets. "You wouldn't believe how many people were packed in there," Senator Jamie Raskin said after a recent visit. "This is an office building. It is not created for these purposes."

"Non traditional facilities" are not built for human habitation. When used to detain people they have been proven to violate values of respect, dignity, and human rights to which all Marylanders are entitled. Allowing DHS to acquire additional "non traditional facilities" in our state is likely to further endanger human rights, public health, and safety of Marylanders both inside and outside these facilities.

For that reason, I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 630.

Sincerely,

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"60 violations in 50 days: Inside ICE's giant tent facility at Ft. Bliss," Washington Post, September 16, 2025

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/09/16/ice-detention-center-immigration-violations/>

ACLU, "Detained Immigrants Detail Physical Abuse and Inhumane Conditions at Largest Immigration Detention Center in the U.S."

<https://www.aclu.org/news/immigrants-rights/detained-immigrants-detail-physical-abuse-and-inhumane-conditions-at-largest-immigration-detention-center-in-the-u-s>

"Homicide at ICE facility sparks El Paso mayor's call for investigation," El Paso Times, January 22, 2026.

<https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/immigration/2026/01/22/el-paso-mayor-renard-johnson-calls-investigation-immigrant-homicide-at-ice-camp-east-montana/88309005007/>

"U.S. Rep. Jamie Raskin calls Baltimore ICE facility "staggeringly overcrowded" CBS News, February 12, 2026.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/maryland-congressman-jamie-raskin-baltimore-ice-facility-overcrowded/>

"Two cases of tuberculosis detected at El Paso ICE facility," February 7, 2026.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2026/02/07/ice-facility-el-paso-tuberculosis/>

"ICE reveals \$38B plan for immigrant mega-jails," Axios, February 13, 2026.

<https://www.axios.com/2026/02/13/ice-immigrant-detention-warehouses-spending>