

EZRA MACLEOD TOWNE

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

March 9, 2026

Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair, Delegate Debra Davis, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. I am writing to you today because I **strongly support HB0630, and ask for a favorable report from the Judiciary committee.**

I am deeply concerned about the number of immigration facilities popping up around our state and the move to place them in already existing buildings not originally made for the detention of human beings – like warehouses.

Housing as many as 1,500 detainees in a warehouse not designed for such a huge population will present a public health crisis and strain local health resources. We also know that ICE facilities such as these are inhumane, with people lying on dirty floors cramped into small spaces, without adequate access to bathrooms or food, not to mention healthcare.

HB0630 would prohibit state and county authorities from entering into an agreement with a private entity to build an ICE detention facility in a space not intended for that use, prohibits any financial incentive to the private entity, and prohibits the private entity from providing incentives to the state and counties.

The bill also limits the state and counties from allowing zoning variances on any new construction of proposed detention facilities unless the public is given 180 days notice, and there are two well-published hearings open to the public about the construction.

Lastly the bill prevents state and county authorities from renewing any already existing immigration detention agreements.

These seem like common sense reforms to the emergency situation of rapidly growing, brutal ICE detention facilities in our state to me. Howard County has already put legislation like this in place – and I firmly believe that the entire state of Maryland should do so as well.

For these reasons, **I urge a swift favorable report on this emergency legislation, SB0630: Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction**

Sincerely,
Ezra Towne
Wheaton, Maryland
District 18