



Mission: To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy **Vision:** Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 630
Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction

Committee: Judiciary

By: Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA)

Hearing Date: February 18, 2026

Dear Chair Sandy Bartlett, Vice-Chair Debra Davis, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 630, which addresses a critical housing access concern by prohibiting the operation of immigration detention facilities in buildings that were not originally designed and constructed for detention purposes.

Housing availability and affordability are strongly linked to physical health, mental health, and overall community well-being. Stable housing reduces stress, supports continuity of care, and lowers the risk of chronic disease, while housing instability and displacement are associated with poorer health outcomes and increased health care utilization.^{1, 2, 3} Policies that reduce housing supply or divert adaptable buildings away from residential use can exacerbate housing shortages and place upward pressure on housing costs, especially in already constrained markets.^{4, 5, 6}

The siting of immigration detention facilities often occurs in underserved communities that are already disproportionately affected by housing insecurity, limited affordable housing, and long-standing disinvestment. Repurposing buildings that could otherwise support residential or community use for detention purposes further restricts housing availability in these areas and deepens existing inequities. Such impacts contribute to overcrowding, displacement, and

¹ World Health Organization. (2018). Housing and health guidelines. Accessed February 10, 2026. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-CED-PHE-18.10>

² Housing And Health: An Overview Of The Literature, " Health Affairs Health Policy Brief, Accessed February 10, 2026. DOI: 10.1377/hpb20180313.396577.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Housing instability. Accessed February 10, 2026. <https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/housing-instability.htm>

⁴ Desmond, M., & Gershenson, C. (2017). Who gets evicted? Assessing individual, neighborhood, and network factors. *Social science research*, 62, 362-377. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.08.017>

⁵ Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. (2024). The state of the nation's housing 2024. Harvard Graduate School of Design & Harvard Kennedy School. Accessed February 10, 2026. https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_The_State_of_the_Nations_Housing_2024.pdf

⁶ Been, Vicki & Ellen, Ingrid & Oregan, Katherine. (2019). Supply Skepticism: Housing Supply and Affordability. *Housing Policy Debate*. 29. 25-40. 10.1080/10511482.2018.1476899.

homelessness, all of which are associated with adverse health outcomes and strain on local health and social systems.^{2, 7}

House Bill 630 establishes a clear and reasonable standard by requiring that immigration detention facilities operate only in buildings originally designed for detention. This approach helps preserve scarce housing resources, promotes responsible land use, and supports healthier, more stable communities. By protecting housing availability, particularly in underserved areas, the bill advances health equity and aligns with evidence-based public health principles.

For these reasons, a favorable report on House Bill 630 is respectfully urged.

Thank you.

The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy, equitable, communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.

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⁷ Kushel, M. B., Gupta, R., Gee, L., & Haas, J. S. (2006). Housing instability and food insecurity as barriers to health care among low-income Americans. *Journal of general internal medicine*, 21(1), 71–77.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1525-1497.2005.00278.x>