

Testimony on House Bill 0630 – Favorable

HB630 - Correctional Services – Immigration Detention Facilities – Original Design and Construction House Judiciary Committee

March 9, 2026

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

My name is Elizabeth Murphy, and I am a resident of District 46 in Baltimore, Maryland. I am writing in support of HB630 - Correctional Services – Immigration Detention Facilities – Original Design and Construction House Judiciary Committee.

I support HB0630 because it gives Maryland a practical tool in defense of fundamental human rights. In tandem with the Dignity Not Detention Act, this would ensure that any facility — federal or private — meets basic standards for human habitation. It would help prevent Maryland from becoming a staging ground for “makeshift” prisons that fail minimum standards of decency.

According to [Project Saltbox](#) estimates, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has recently spent over \$894 million on warehouses across the United States. Originally built to store consumer goods, these structures are being hastily converted to hold people. Collectively, the facilities already sold could detain tens of thousands of people, and would cost billions of dollars to operate while also draining millions of dollars from local property tax revenues. Typically, government leasing of this magnitude would involve a visible, bureaucratic process, thereby allowing for greater accountability. In this instance, however, the General Services Administration was directed to bypass standard operating procedures in favor of speed and discretion. Recent reporting by [WIRED](#) made clear that the locations for these facilities, and the way in which they were acquired or planned, were intended to be a secret.

In Maryland, DHS recently paid \$102.4 million for a Williamsport warehouse with no plumbing, electrical systems, or water infrastructure designed for human habitation. The sale was finalized without public notice. The same thing nearly happened in Elkridge before the county council intervened.

We know the reality of these “warehouses” based on the harrowing accounts of DHS’s human rights abuses across the country, including children subjected to conditions resembling torture. At the Fallon building here in Baltimore, recently leaked video shows detainees packed shoulder-to-shoulder in rooms unfit for use.

House Bill 630 responds to efforts by this Administration to bypass standard oversight and public notice to purchase warehouses that were never intended to house human beings, in total secrecy. The bill would require that detention facilities operate only in buildings specifically constructed for that purpose. Regardless of the federal agency or the procurement vehicle used, Maryland must maintain standards for what operates within its borders.

At a time when DHS is terrorizing communities across the country and trampling on basic human rights—Maryland must set a standard to uphold democratic principles and rule of law, and protect all those who reside here.

I respectfully urge this committee to support HB 0630, Correctional Services – Immigration Detention Facilities – Original Design and Construction.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Murphy
District 46
Baltimore, MD