



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony

HB630 - Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction Favorable Report

To: Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair, Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Judiciary Committee
From: Jim Caldiero, Lead Advocate for Immigration,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of MD
Date: March 10, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony IN FAVOR of **HB 630 - Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction** which would prohibit a person (ie: an individual, receiver, trustee, guardian, personal representative, fiduciary, representative of any kind, partnership, firm, association, corporation, or other entity) from operating an immigration detention facility at a building, structure, or facility that was not originally designed and constructed for the purpose of housing or detaining individuals.

I encourage the Committee to deliver a favorable report.

During the current national administration, we have seen explosive growth in immigrant detention facilities across the country, including Maryland. With a massive and unprecedented availability of billions of dollars in appropriated funds, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has initiated an expansive detention capacity, purchasing and converting large private buildings and warehouses into detention centers and processing facilities to meet its objective of 92,000 detention beds nationwide. ICE has purchased seven warehouses in Arizona, Georgia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Texas. Some of these warehouses are enormous, capable of housing (if that's the right word) up to 10,000 detainees.

Many of these sites are purchased with little to no knowledge or involvement by the local community and with little regard to proximity to schools and homes or available infrastructure such as water and waste disposal.

Moreover, there are significant humanitarian concerns. The Department of Homeland Security and its subordinate agency, ICE, have a long, documented history of inhumane treatment, inadequate medical care, and unsafe conditions that have put the lives of detained immigrants at risk.

A recent congressional delegation to an ICE detention facility in Minnesota, Fort Snelling, for example, described the conditions as “akin to a third world prison.” U.S. Representative Kelly Morrison, a medical doctor, echoed the concerns of the detainees about the lack of healthcare and scarcity of blankets when they were forced to sleep on the floor.

We must ensure that these appalling conditions will not exist in Maryland. Urgent action is needed to protect the lives of immigrants in detention before it's too late. **HB 630** is one step toward ensuring humane treatment, ending mass incarceration, and dismantling the private prison industry in Maryland.

My faith, which I share with more than 4000 Unitarian Universalists across the state, affirms that every human being has worth and should be treated with respect and dignity. The inhumane treatment of immigrant detainees is anathema to these values. Please ensure that no immigrant in Maryland will suffer the indignities described.

I encourage the Committee to deliver a favorable report for **HB 630**.

Thank you.

Sources:

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