



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 11th 2026

HB630

**Correctional Services - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and
Construction**

Judiciary Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 630**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 630 would prohibit the operation of an immigration detention facility in any building, structure, or location that was not originally designed and constructed specifically for the purpose of housing or detaining individuals. In essence, the legislation establishes a clear standard that facilities used for immigration detention must be properly designed and equipped to safely and humanely house those in custody, rather than repurpose buildings that were never intended for that function.

This bill ensures that detention facilities meet appropriate standards of safety, dignity, and oversight. Too often, facilities not designed for detention—such as converted warehouses, office spaces, or other structures—lack the infrastructure necessary to provide adequate living conditions, medical care access, ventilation, sanitation, and safety features required for individuals being held for extended periods of time. By requiring that detention centers be purpose-built, the bill aims to prevent unsafe or inadequate conditions and to promote accountability in how detention facilities are established and operated.

This bill would have meaningful benefits for communities, families, and individuals. Ensuring that detention facilities meet proper design standards helps safeguard the health and well-being of those detained while also providing clarity and consistency for local jurisdictions and oversight agencies. It reinforces responsible facility planning, reduces the risk of harmful or substandard conditions, and promotes transparency in how detention operations are managed within the state. Communities benefit when facilities operate under clear regulations that prioritize safety, humane treatment, and public accountability.

Every person possesses inherent dignity, regardless of their immigration status or circumstances. The Church consistently teaches that those who are detained—particularly migrants and asylum seekers—must be treated with respect, compassion, and humane care. Ensuring that detention facilities are properly designed and constructed for their intended

purpose helps uphold this dignity and protects vulnerable individuals from unsafe or degrading conditions. No individual or family should have to endure the emotional distress of locating a loved one in detention only to discover that they are living in inadequate or inhumane conditions. Maryland has the opportunity to lead with compassion by ensuring that policies reflect our commitment to human dignity. By prioritizing humane treatment and the well-being of every person, the state can demonstrate that respect for human life and dignity remains at the center of our public policies.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 630**.