

Date of Hearing: March 11, 2026

Jo Shifrin

Bethesda, Maryland 20817

**TESTIMONY ON HB 630 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Correctional Service - Immigration Detention Facilities -  
Original Design and Construction**

**TO:** Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Jo Shifrin

**My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 630, Correctional Service - Immigration Detention Facilities - Original Design and Construction.**

I am a retiree and moved to Bethesda in 2014 to be near my grandchildren. I'm a member of Adat Shalom, a Reconstructionist synagogue in Bethesda. My support for this legislation comes from my Jewish values. Among these values are *Tikkun Olam*, an obligation to make the world a more fair and equitable place for people to live.

I support HB 630 because current Maryland law creates loopholes that allow private companies to obtain approvals on detention centers without the proper zoning requirements. Buildings that are utilized to warehouse goods are being bought to detain human beings without regard for whether they have the correct infrastructure to safely and humanely do so. Human rights abuses are already being seen at the Fallon Center in Baltimore, where a hundred or more immigrants are being crammed into tight spaces with no access to clean water or bathing facilities. There is a clear need to pass laws that will enforce basic health and safety standards on building operations used to detain people.

Private property owners, like the one in Williamsport, Maryland, have an interest in selling their operations as quickly as possible. For health and safety reasons, facilities originally built to warehouse goods should not be repurposed into correctional facilities. This law aims to prohibit individuals or companies from operating sites as correctional facilities when the original purpose of the site was storage of goods.

One of the Jewish values that I follow is *Dei Machsoro*, providing people what they need to live and thrive, which is severely at odds with warehousing human beings. Maryland has an obligation to implement laws that protect the health and safety of all human beings, especially those who are detained or incarcerated. For these reasons, **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 630.**