

Dear House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing in support of HB0630.

This bill is essential for Maryland – our state cannot leave open the possibility of being complicit in an atrocity. As you vote in favor, please remember the phrase “Never again.”

HB0630 prohibits the operation of an immigration detention facility in any building that was not originally designed and constructed for detaining people. This protection is urgently needed. Across the country, we’ve seen attempts to convert warehouses and industrial spaces into makeshift detention centers, and Maryland has already faced similar proposals. Communities have been clear: these facilities should not exist at all—certainly not in retrofitted warehouses that cannot meet basic standards of safety or dignity.

I cannot accept the inhumanity of holding anyone in a warehouse, let alone children or parents separated from their children. Improvised facilities lack proper ventilation, sanitation, medical care, and oversight. They are fundamentally incompatible with Maryland’s values and with any reasonable expectation of humane treatment.

Maryland’s recent experience shows why statewide action is essential. DHS has already purchased a warehouse in Washington County for a 1,500-bed processing center, and the county commissioners passed a resolution supporting it. Meanwhile, Howard County took the opposite approach—revoking permits for a similar project and moving to ban privately operated detention facilities altogether.

HB0630 is designed to prevent this kind of patchwork. If enacted, it would override local support for warehouse-style detention centers and render the Washington County resolution largely symbolic, aligning state law with the decisive action already taken in Howard County.

HB0630 ensures that Maryland speaks with one voice: we will not allow inhumane, warehouse-style detention centers in our state. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB0630.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Mitchell