

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 677  
Judiciary

(Delegate Stewart, *et al.*)

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Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition (Dignity Not  
Detention Act)

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This bill prohibits the State or any local jurisdiction from entering into an agreement relating to the establishment of an immigration detention facility owned or operated by a private entity. The bill prohibits the State or any local jurisdiction from approving a zoning variance or permit for the construction or reuse of buildings that will be used by private entities as an immigration detention facility without first notifying the public and holding public meetings for comment. The bill also prohibits the State or any local jurisdiction from entering into or renewing an immigration detention agreement. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources. Any change in State activities does not materially impact State finances.

**Local Effect:** Federal fund revenues decrease by a significant amount for counties with an existing immigration detention agreement with the federal government. Currently, three local governments (Frederick, Howard, and Worcester counties) receive approximately \$9.1 million in payments from the federal government to house individuals under a federal immigration agreement. Expenditures decrease to the extent that local jurisdictions no longer provide immigration detention services for the federal government. In Worcester County, the potential decrease in local detention center expenditures could be significant. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The bill defines an “immigration detention agreement” as any contract, agreement, intergovernmental service agreement, or memorandum of understanding that authorizes a State or local government agency to house or detain individuals for federal civil immigration violations. The bill defines “immigration detention facility” as any building, facility, or structure used, in whole or in part, to house or detain individuals for federal civil immigration violations.

The State, local governments, and specified State and local agents are prohibited from (1) entering into an agreement of any kind for the detention of individuals in an immigration detention facility owned, managed, or operated, in whole or in part, by a private entity; (2) paying, reimbursing, subsidizing, or defraying in any way any costs related to the sale, purchase, construction, development, ownership, management, or operation of an immigration detention facility that is or will be owned, managed, or operated, in whole or in part, by a private entity; (3) receiving any payment related to the detention of individuals in an immigration detention facility owned, managed, or operated in whole or in part, by a private entity; or (4) otherwise giving any financial incentive or benefit to any private entity or person in connection with the sale, purchase, construction, development, ownership, management, or operation of an immigration detention facility that is or will be owned, managed, or operated, in whole or in part, by a private entity.

The State, local governments, and specified State and local agents are prohibited from approving a zoning variance or issuing a permit for the construction of a building or the reuse of existing buildings or structures by any private entity for use as an immigration detention facility unless the entity (1) provides notice to the public of the proposed zoning variance or permit action at least 180 days before authorizing the variance or issuing the permit and (2) solicits and hears public comments on the proposed zoning variance or permit action in at least two separate meetings open to the public.

The State, local governments, and specified State and local agents are prohibited from entering into or renewing an immigration detention agreement. Those with an existing immigration detention agreement must exercise the termination provision contained in the immigration detention agreement no later than October 1, 2021. In any dispute over an immigration detention agreement with the State, the provisions of the bill govern.

The bill includes a severability clause establishing that if any of the bill’s provisions are held invalid by a court, the invalidity of those provisions does not affect the validity of the other provisions and application of those provisions.

**Current Law/Background:** While immigration is controlled by federal law, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Immigration, Customs, and

Enforcement Division (ICE) have initiated numerous programs that involve state and local law enforcement agencies as allies and additional resources. For example, DHS's Priority Enforcement Program (PEP) was established in 2014 to enable DHS to work with state and local law enforcement to take custody of individuals who pose a danger to public safety before those individuals are released. Under the PEP program, after an individual was arrested and booked for a criminal violation, state and local law enforcement officers would send data to ICE so that ICE could determine whether the individual was a priority for removal, consistent with the DHS enforcement priorities. Under PEP, ICE would seek the transfer of a removable individual when that individual had been convicted of a specified offense, had intentionally participated in an organized criminal gang to further the illegal activity of the gang, or posed a danger to national security.

Another initiative, authorized under Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act, allows the Secretary of Homeland Security to enter into written agreements to delegate limited immigration enforcement authority to state and local law enforcement officers. In Maryland, the 287(g) program has been established in three jurisdictions – Cecil, Frederick, and Harford counties. In 2008, the Frederick County Sheriff's Office entered into a partnership with ICE to begin the 287(g) Criminal Alien Program within the county. This partnership entailed training office personnel from both the county detention center and law enforcement operations to become authorized to identify and begin deportation proceedings against undocumented immigrants. The Frederick County Sheriff's Office is one of the few law enforcement offices nationwide that participate in both the jail enforcement program and the law enforcement task force program. In addition, the local detention center in Harford County participates in the 287(g) program. Cecil County began participating in the 287(g) program in February 2019. Anne Arundel County previously participated in the federal program starting in December 2017 but later withdrew in December 2018.

Despite the President's increased focus on undocumented immigrants, federal law still does not mandate that state and local law enforcement agencies become involved in immigration efforts. The Office of the Attorney General of Maryland reissued a letter of advice in [December 2018](#) pertaining to immigration detainers. Such detainers are notices sent from ICE to state or local law enforcement agencies that request the agency to continue to hold the person named in the detainer for up to 48 hours past the date that the individual is otherwise eligible for release. The letter noted that relevant federal regulations specify that the detainer is a request that a state or local agency advise DHS, prior to the detainee's release, in order for DHS to arrange to assume custody in situations in which gaining immediate physical custody is impracticable or impossible. The letter advised that state and local jurisdictions may exercise discretion when determining how to respond to individual immigration detainers.

## *California Provision on Private Detention Facilities*

In October 2019, California passed [Assembly Bill 32](#) into law. Among other things, the law prohibited the state from entering into or renewing contracts with for-profit prison companies after January 1, 2020, in addition to phasing out existing facilities by 2028, in effect prohibiting the state from participating in the private detention of federal immigration detainees. In December 2019, California was sued by a private for-profit prison company, arguing that the law was an attempt to interfere with the federal government's authority to enforce federal immigration law. The case is ongoing as of February 2020.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Three local governments (Frederick, Howard, and Worcester counties) currently have immigration detention agreements with the federal government. As shown in **Exhibit 1**, the three jurisdictions receive approximately \$9.1 million in payments from the federal government to house individuals under a federal immigration detention agreement. In Worcester County, the federal payments account for approximately 54% of the total cost of operating the county's detention center. In Frederick and Howard counties, the federal payments account for less than 15% of the total operating cost of the local detention center.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Local Governments with Federal Immigration Detention Agreements**  
**Federal Payments and Share of Total Detention Center Costs**  
**Fiscal 2020**

	<u>Frederick</u>	<u>Howard</u>	<u>Worcester</u>
Federal Payments	\$1.0 million	\$2.9 million	\$5.2 million
Total Detention Center Costs	16.1 million	20.5 million	9.7 million
Federal Payments As Percent of Total Costs	6%	14%	54%

Source: County Budget Documents, Department of Legislative Services

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**Additional Comments:** The Department of Legislative Services notes, however, that current law regarding the immigration status of specified individuals is still unsettled due to ongoing lawsuits and the federal government's responses to state laws concerning local enforcement of immigration law.

Pursuant to [an executive order dated January 25, 2017](#), President Trump directed the U.S. Attorney General to take appropriate enforcement action against any entity violating  
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specified provisions of federal law or which has in effect a statute, policy, or practice that prevents or hinders the enforcement of federal law. The executive order also declared that it is the policy of the Executive Branch to ensure that jurisdictions that fail to comply with applicable federal law do not receive federal funds, except as mandated by law. The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the executive order's provisions denying federal funds to jurisdictions refusing to cooperate with federal immigration policy is unconstitutional. However, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in a different case that the federal government may give preferential treatment in awarding grants to cities that cooperate with immigration authorities.

In February 2020, the Trump administration blocked citizens of New York from participating in programs that expedite border crossings in response to the enactment of the state's passage of the "[Green Light Law](#)." Among other things, the law prevents the New York Department of Motor Vehicles from sharing information with federal government agencies that primarily enforce immigration laws. The State of New York subsequently filed a lawsuit to block the federal government's action. The case is ongoing.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** SB 850 (Senator Sydnor, *et al.*) - Judicial Proceedings.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City; Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Worcester counties; Maryland Association of Counties; cities of Annapolis and Bowie; Maryland Municipal League; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 24, 2020  
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Analysis by: Thomas S. Elder

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510