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**HB 677 - SUPPORT
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES - IMMIGRATION DETENTION -
PROHIBITION (DIGNITY NOT DETENTION ACT)**

Judiciary Committee
February 25, 2020

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I represent the Cecil County Democrat Club. Our main focus is advancing ideals of human rights in Cecil County from helping the homeless to defending the immigrant population. Myself and our membership would like to express our support for HB 677.

Passing of HB 677 would go a long way towards making the immigrant community of Cecil County feel more welcome. Ever since the signing of the 287g agreement in Cecil County, and even before then, many in the immigrant community have lived in fear in their own homes. Passing of HB 677 would be a great start to show that the state of Maryland is taking steps to welcome the immigrant community as part of our family of Marylanders.

In Cecil County this has become especially imperative because the current mood has led to a distrust of law enforcement in our county. Recently, a Mexican restaurant was held up at gun point twice. Sadly, the employees there were too frightened to work with local law enforcement to bring this criminal to justice because they feared being sent off to a private detention facility. A violent criminal walked free for too long simply because authorities did not do what was necessary to build trust with the community they are charged to protect. This is why we can not wait on passing HB 677, it is vital that we start taking steps to build trust between law enforcement and the immigrant community to make all of Maryland safer.

We urge a favorable report on HB 677.