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FAIR is a nonprofit public interest organization working to end illegal immigration and to set levels of legal immigration that are consistent with the national interest.



February 5, 2021

The Honorable William Smith, Jr., Chairman
Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Smith and other distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Shari Rendall and I am the Director of State and Local Engagement at the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). FAIR is an non-profit, non-partisan organization of concerned individuals who believe that our immigration laws must be reformed to serve our nation’s interests.

FAIR advocates for immigration policies that reduce the harmful impact of illegal immigration on national security, public safety, the economy, jobs, education, healthcare and the environment.

Founded in 1979, FAIR has three million members and supporters nationwide including approximately 12,300 in Maryland. On behalf of our members and supporters, I am writing to express FAIR’s opposition to Senate Bill (SB) 478.

SB 478 prohibits state and local jurisdictions from entering into agreements with any private detention facility or contractor, paying any costs or receiving any payments from private detention facilities or contractors, and approving zoning variances and permits for private detention facilities or contractors unless notice has been provided for 180 days to allow public comment. Additionally, SB 478 requires state and local jurisdictions to end all immigration detention agreements by October 1, 2022.

The majority of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facilities are private because the facilities are well run and more efficient, costing taxpayers less money. However, many open-borders advocates demonize private detention facilities, hoping to convince the American people that no individuals entering the United States illegally should be detained. This concept of open borders has public safety and national security risks. Ninety percent of the illegal aliens arrested by ICE in the interior of the United States are either convicted criminals or face pending criminal charges. If these individuals were released back into the community instead of detained, approximately half would re-offend within a year and 75 percent



would re-offend within five years, according to former ICE Director Tom Homan.

In addition, proponents of the bill claim these private facilities operate outside the purview of public oversight and accountability. However, this is simply untrue. The private companies and contactors that operate these facilities must comply with strict governmental requirements as well as national accreditation and certification standards.

Moreover, policies like SB 478 hamper ICE's ability to effectively accomplish its statutorily mandated mission to identify and ultimately remove illegal aliens. However, if Maryland enacts this legislation, it will not succeed in stopping the detention of illegal aliens. It will simply raise the detention costs on taxpayers and it will mean individuals will be detained in other states further away from their families and counsel.

Finally, SB 478 imposes a "one-size-fits-all" policy statewide on communities that have already made the decision locally that they want a private detention facility. Such facilities provide both well-paying jobs and streams of federal revenue to localities that are already in dire straits due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic downturn. Enacting SB 478 could likely pull the rug out from under these localities and be economically devastating.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide my input. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, if I may be of assistance. I may be reached by email at srendall@fairus.org or by phone at 202-328-7004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari Rendall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shari Rendall