

Hearing Date: February 10, 2021
15 Windward Court
Berlin, MD 21811
410-208-2756

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB478/HB16
Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition
(Dignity Not Detention Act)

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Margaret Miller and I live in Worcester County, Maryland. I moved here in 2006 from Baltimore and retired in 2016 from my job as a nurse attorney with The Medical Protective Company, a division of Berkshire Hathaway, which provided medical malpractice coverage to doctors, hospitals, dentists and other healthcare professionals.

One of my clients was a prison system healthcare provider who served numerous jails in Florida, Louisiana and Georgia. I got a good taste of the difference between how privately owned jails worked from those run by the state. All of the privately owned jails were interested only in profit, not the well being of the inmates. Too frequently the care rendered in the privately owned jail was driven only by cost, not the standard of care. These cases were difficult to defend and costly for my company because of the devastating results that occurred. I was surprised and saddened to learn that our own jail here in Worcester County was not only being used to hold ICE detainees, but could be privately funded. There should be no privately funded ICE detention Center here in this County and no jail anywhere in Maryland should be privately funded. Every day it does continue, people will be denied basic healthcare needs, will suffer needlessly and be cared for by healthcare providers who are not looking out for the inmates and detainees best interests, just what is the cheapest care. Especially in this pandemic, this should not be allowed to continue. Time is of the essence.

I urge a favorable report on SB478, the closure of the ICE Detention Center in Worcester County and cessation of privately owned jails and detention centers in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Margaret R. Miller, RN, JD