

TESTIMONY FOR SB0478
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES – IMMIGRATION DETENTION - PROHIBITION
(DIGNITY NOT DETENTION ACT)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Smith
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Person Submitting: Renee Cantori, Annapolis, MD
Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0478.
My mother was an immigrant, my father was the child of immigrants, and I have many friends and family members who are immigrants with varying degrees of legal status. And I help and have helped many newcomers over the past few decades. These friends, family, neighbors, they are just like you and me. They are hard-working and seek a good and safe life for themselves and their families...and they live in fear every day. Every day, I fear “the call” when I find out that one of my friends, or family, or those that I help may be picked up and detained. I have gotten these calls, and I can tell you, if there are extremely unsettling for me, then they’re absolutely terrifying for the immigrant and his or her family.

For money, they are being preyed upon. County governments are making contracts with private companies to do ‘their bidding’. These companies have questionable accountability and seek to profit from a person’s misfortune. We shut down 287G here in Anne Arundel County. ALL local governments, counties or sheriff’s offices should be prevented from entering into contracts for detention facilities for immigrants in Maryland. And similarly, entities within ALL counties should be prohibited from contracting with private firms to own or manage such facilities. And any existing detention facilities that fit the descriptions above should be shut down.

Bottom line? The way things are operating now is not the Maryland, or America that I wish to live in. Pls support SB0478.