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Testimony in support of SB0478/HB0016

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

To: To: Hon. William Smith, Chair, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Jerry Kickenson and Martha Wells, Congregation Action Network

Date: February 10, 2021

We are writing in **support of House Bill 0016/Senate Bill 0478**, Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act), on behalf of the Congregation Action Network. The Congregation Action Network is a network of faith communities in Washington, DC, and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs acting in solidarity to end detention, deportation, profiling, and criminalization of immigrants and demanding and upholding justice, dignity, safety, and family unity. With over 75 congregations and a thousand members throughout the capital area, including over 25 congregations with thousands of members in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, we live our faith in advocacy for and solidarity with our immigrant neighbors.

As people of faith committed to ending the detention and deportation of immigrants, we adhere to the sacred texts of most major faiths that call for welcoming the stranger and treating each other with love, dignity, respect, and compassion. We believe in liberation and that immigrant families should be united and free - never incarcerated.

SB0478/HB0016 would end state and local agency involvement in the cruel, immoral and counterproductive incarceration of immigrants and require transparency in any zoning or permitting decisions taken by local jurisdictions that enable private facilities that intend to incarcerate immigrants within Maryland.

We strongly urge you to reach a favorable report for SB0478/HB0016. It is the moral and right thing to do.

Respectfully yours,

Jerry Kickenson

Cluster Leader, Congregation Action Network (Montgomery County)

Martha Wells

Cluster Leader, Congregation Action Network (Prince Georges County)