

Testimony in Support of SB478(HB16) - Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

To: Senator Will Smith, Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Gavin Kohn, (gavin.kohn@gmail.com)

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My name is Gavin Kohn, and I live in Howard County, Maryland. I am testifying in support of the Dignity Not Detention SB478, and I urge you to vote 'Yes' on this legislation as it stands.

Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) has a long history of exploiting, harming, and violating immigrants in this country. Recently, ICE was very credibly accused of conducting forced hysterectomies on women in their detention centers, as well as having terrible medical conditions, especially during a pandemic. (1)

This type of treatment is present at ICE detention centers in Maryland as well, with the Jessup Detention center (Howard County) being cited by the DHS as having unacceptable conditions for detainees. The treatment found by DHS included **excessive strip searching, not providing adequate food**, and much more. (2)

Because of these reasons, we need to end all associations with ICE. When detention centers close, ICE is forced to release inmates. This will release people who have no reason to be detained; since everyone ICE holds is held for a civil violation and is not serving time for a crime. These people do not need to be held in detention, and Maryland should cancel existing ICE IGSA contracts and prevent new contracts from being signed.

Please support HB0016, the Dignity Not Detention Act, and vote against any exemptions that allow existing detention centers to remain in operation.

Gavin Kohn, Columbia, MD 21045

Citations

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-54160638>
2. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/crime/ice-violations-found-at-howard-county-detention-center-department-of-homeland-security-report-says/ar-BB1aM2Hz>