

Jeffrey A. Harrison

February 8, 2021

Bill Title: Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

Bill Number: **SB 478**

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Position: **Favorable / Support**

Contact: Senator Smith

Dear Committee Chair Smith, Committee Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members:

I strongly support SB 478. Enforcement of federal immigration laws is the responsibility of the federal government. Our state and local governments in Maryland need to focus on state and local law enforcement and the delivery of governmental services to Maryland residents. Marylanders demand that our state and local governments get out of the federal-immigration-law-enforcement business !

The use of incarceration in Maryland needs to be minimized. Incarceration as practiced in our country is inherently brutal and dehumanizing. Every person in the United States has constitutional rights. People who are alleged to have violated federal immigration laws should not be incarcerated in any facility in Maryland but instead need to be represented by an attorney and need to live in the community or with sponsors.

Making a profit from incarceration facilities needs to be banned in Maryland. For-profit incarceration incentivizes more incarceration.

Immigration detention facilities are inhumane. More than 50 people have died in ICE and CBP facilities in the past four years. In those facilities, thousands of incarcerated people have been infected with Covid-19 because of overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and inadequate medical care. ICE, CBP, and their contractors have subjected incarcerated people to atrocities such as sexual assaults and forced hysterectomies.

For-profit prison companies operate with little oversight and little accountability. One atrocious example in our region is Immigration Centers of America (ICA), which operates the ICE prison in Farmville, Virginia. As reported in 2020, nearly 90% of the incarcerated people at ICA Farmville, 259 of 298 people, tested positive for Covid-19. At least one ICA-Farmville-incarcerated person died in 2020. See References 1 and 2. ICA would like to build at least one more ICE prison in our region. Maryland must not support that !

For those reasons, I urge you to support SB 478.

Please send a Favorable report from the committee. Thank you.

Jeffrey A. Harrison

(a member of Greenbelt People Power)

6835 Damsel Ct, Greenbelt MD 20770 (District 22), Jeff6836@gmail.com

Reference 1: <https://prospect.org/justice/farmville-ice-facility-almost-every-detainee-has-coronavirus/>

Reference 2: <https://www.wric.com/news/virginia-news/farmville-ice-detention-center-needs-to-give-detainees-more-space-to-reduce-covid-19-risk-cdc-report-says/>