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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB478
**Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not
Detention Act)**

My name is Ariel Greenberg and I have been a Maryland resident for twenty-five years. I have resided in District 21 for the past 5 years. This testimony is in support of SB88/HB304.

As a Jew and as a descendent of Holocaust survivors, I am compelled to speak out against the mistreatment of refugees and immigrants in our communities. The Torah commands us to love and welcome the stranger thirty-six different times; in fact, this act is mentioned more frequently than any other; for example: “You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19) and “You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Exodus 22:20).

I am appalled that the state of Maryland has been cooperating with ICE, and has been housing ICE detainees for profit. Currently, between the three facilities already in existence, our state profits amount to millions of dollars from this collaboration. Maryland has done this willingly, as there is no requirement for our state to cooperate with federal agencies; it is a decision that our state has made in the past, and one that you, our representatives, can reverse.

The detainees held at these centers are often held for minor infractions, such as speeding tickets; sometimes, they are held only for their immigration status, such as an individual who was detained for driving a car that belonged to someone else that officials were seeking out. In the process, they are separated from their families, who then must incur tremendous costs in paying bail or other fees in order to be reunited with their loved ones. The policy of ICE detention is not only cruel, but it does not make economic sense: these are individuals who otherwise would be productively contributing to the local economy, but instead are losing jobs, housing, and more.

It is time for Maryland to take California’s lead and help pave the way for other states looking to enact similar legislation. Waiting for the federal government to reform ICE is a losing proposition, as administrations turn over and federal policy changes. Our state does not have a responsibility to enforce immigration policy, and in fact, we have a moral obligation to do all we can to protect *all* our residents.

I urge you to stand up for the fundamental dignity of our immigrant neighbors. I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB478.

Ariel M. Greenberg