

February 8, 2021

Dear members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Emile Feldenzer and I am a resident of District 43 in Baltimore City. I am writing to urge you to SUPPORT SB0478, *Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)*.

Private detention facilities run by ICE have always endangered the lives of undocumented immigrants with rampant abuse and neglect, but the COVID-19 pandemic has made them even more deadly. Overcrowding and a lack of proper treatment for the sick have caused ICE detainees to contract COVID-19 at 13 times the rate of the general public. This creates all the more opportunity for the pandemic to spread in communities surrounding the detention centers, which are often located in rural areas with less hospital capacity. But more to the point, seeking asylum in the state of Maryland should not be a death sentence.

It is just not sensible or humane to financially incentivize ICE raids and profiling of immigrant communities, especially in this moment where community and individual health are so closely intertwined. Prison walls and borders cannot contain or keep out what threatens us. Immigrants are essential workers and beloved community members, and none of us can truly live with dignity when our local governments are profiting from their suffering.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony.

Sincerely,

--Emile Feldenzer