

February 10, 2021

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Baltimore, MD 21218

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB478/HB16**  
**Correctional Services-Immigration Detention-Prohibition**  
**(Dignity Not Detention Act)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Zackary Berger

My name is Zackary Berger, and I live in Baltimore City in District 43. I submit this testimony in support of SB478/HB16, Correctional Services-Immigration Detention-Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act).

I am writing as a primary care physician for undocumented Spanish-speaking immigrants. It is a continuing tragedy that these people coming to our country for a better life are victimized by brutal, negligent Federal agencies who exist only to enforce bewildering, arbitrary, and purposeless laws against those who make our country worth living in. That our State agencies collect the blood money of Federal agencies to jail and mistreat immigrants is a black mark on Maryland and all elected officials who eagerly traffic with ICE.

If you sat with me in the clinic you would see the trauma these people go through to get here. They should be welcomed and supported, not jailed for crossing imagined boundaries as they flee from violence and danger.

I recall the story of M., a patient of mine in her 40s, who fashioned a raft to cross a river and the US-Mexico border. She lives in Maryland. Her husband was deported for a civil offense. I met H. in Washington state. He worked in vineyards for 35 years, and because he was caught speeding, he was torn away from his 3 children.

I am testifying for the Dignity not Detention Act to cease complicity with these brutal acts on the part of our government. And since, as far as I am aware, ICE will not be dismantled under the new Federal administration, this topic will remain current no matter who lives in the White House. **I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB478/HB16.**