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written testimony - HoCo Council legislative session - February 4, 2026

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**From** Adil Ahmed [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 4:04 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

 1 attachment (60 KB)

Letter to HoCo Council- Adil Ahmed - Written Testimony, February 4, 2026.pdf;

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Good afternoon,

Please find my written testimony for the record attached for the two bills up for discussion tomorrow, February 4, 2026. I do not intend to testify in person.

Sincerely,

Adil Ahmed  
Columbia, MD 21045

Dear Distinguished Members of the Howard County Council,

I, Adil Ahmed, am writing to offer favorable written testimony for the two pieces of legislation up for discussion by the Council on February 4, 2026.

As a member of the Howard County Muslim Alliance, I am writing to express my community's strong support for these bills.

**I. RE: County Executive Ball's Emergency Legislation - Amending – Howard County Building Code – I-3 Use group**

Thank you, County Executive Ball, for filing this emergency legislation upon notice that a private owner of a commercial warehouse was intending to utilize a gap in our zoning rules to house detained human beings.

In addition to fixing the gap in our land use law, we must acknowledge that commercial warehouses were never designed to house humans. We have seen the human rights abuses by the current leaders of the federal government against these detained individuals with our very own eyes, and we can only expect more of the same. Requiring a final inspection based on the intended use will ensure that we are holding these private operators to the fullest extent of the law.

Furthermore, it should be noted that when and if the current activities in these warehouses across the country are found to be illegal - the County will have the right to revoke permits at that point as well.

Lastly, we appreciate the social stance you are taking here - Howard County is a county of immigrants, a truly diverse fabric. Allowing this warehouse to operate here, particularly along this critical commercial corridor, will surely scare away the very folks, documented and undocumented, who make Howard County run and thrive. We cannot allow that.

**II. RE: Councilwoman Walsh's CB17-2026 County Executive – Immigration Enforcement – Guidance**

We also strongly urge the Council to support Councilwoman Walsh's legislation.

It's important for a government to operate with one voice. Therefore, establishing policy and educating county staff on that policy will ensure that those public employees who are on the front-lines of interacting with County residents are keeping all of us safe and not utilizing their privileged positions to put our most vulnerable in further jeopardy.

Thank you,  
Adil Ahmed  
Columbia, MD 21045

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Written Testimony for Public Hearing Regarding ICE in Howard County

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From Alex Lima [REDACTED] >

Date Tue 2/3/2026 6:51 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>; Ball, Calvin <cball@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear Howard County Leadership,

I am writing to submit my formal testimony in strong opposition to the operation of an ICE detention facility in Howard County.

As a resident of this inclusive community, I believe that the presence of such a facility contradicts the values of safety and diversity that define our county. My opposition is informed by a recent firsthand encounter where I witnessed an apprehension on Route 175. This experience caused significant distress for my family and highlights the climate of fear these operations create within our community.

I urge Howard County leadership to protect the peace and tranquility of our residents by refusing to host these operations.

Thank you for your time and for considering this testimony.

Sincerely,

Alex Lima

"You are worth exactly what you say you are worth. Know your full potential and the true value of your talents. Recognize that you are a very special individual with boundless capacity for health, wealth, happiness, love, success, prosperity and money."

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## Urgent Opposition to Proposed ICE Detention Facility in Elkridge

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**From** Anja Dunphy [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 1:33 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>  
**Cc** Ball, Calvin <cball@howardcountymd.gov>

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I received an email yesterday letting the public know there are plans for an ICE detention center in a private building in Elkridge. I want to make it clear that I am opposing this in the strongest possible way.

What we've seen around the country, and in Minneapolis in particular, is horrifying with communities being flung into chaos and despair over the increased presence of these masked agents who are abducting and, in some cases, murdering people in the streets. We have friends and family in Minneapolis- they're reporting that whatever we're seeing in the news here is wrong. It's actually much worse and there's a widespread belief that nobody is coming to help them.

That's the violence you would be inviting into our community by allowing ICE to use any buildings in your jurisdiction. Passing legislation preventing ICE from using privately owned buildings is one step you can take to protect your constituents and our families. Failure to do so puts us all in physical danger- my children and yours included.

Pass Council Bill 16-2026 as quickly as possible to affirm we will not roll over for this kind of barbarism. Howard County stands for the safety, dignity, and freedom of our people. This is a pivotal moment in history when we all need to make clear what we stand for and what we will not tolerate.

Thank you,  
Anja Dunphy  
Ellicott City, MD

## Testimony on CB16-2026

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**From** Crl Zrvs [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 2:58 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

 1 attachment (19 KB)

Testimony on Council Bill 16-2026.docx;

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Dear Councilmembers Jones, Jung, Walsh, Rigby, and Yungmann, attached please find my testimony in favor of CB16-2026.

Warm regards,  
Carol Zervas

**Testimony on Council Bill 16-2026 – Favorable  
Prohibits Privately Owned Buildings in Howard County  
From Operating as Detention Centers  
Howard County Council  
February 4, 2026**

Dear Honorable Councilmembers Liz Walsh, Opel Jones, Christiana Rigby, Deb Jung, and David Yungmann:

I, **Carol Zervas**, am writing to offer favorable testimony in support of **Council Bill 16-2026**.

To date, the current federal administration has manufactured many opportunities to thwart and weaken the rule of law. Its use of ICE is one such effort.

- I believe it is fact to say that, in recent history, no punitive actions, other than placing members of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on leave, have been taken by federal authorities.
- The absence of any such legal or punitive actions or enforcement of existing law stands out as acceptance of the many documented instances of ICE and CBP having disturbed the peace of a city; detained, arrested, and/or deported members of communities and even U.S. citizens without probable cause, the possession of warrants, or the due process to which these people were entitled.
- Further, enough evidence exists to warrant some form of recognized, punitive action by the authority which they serve against members of ICE and/or CBP for their documented use of excessive force; unjustified deadly force; improper weapons usage; misconduct in performing restraint; assault/abuse; and violations of the Constitutionally granted rights of all members of the public.
- The Trump administration wants to demonstrate that it and its minions are above the law, that they are the ruling authority which is independent of and over the law itself.
- If it were known that a private citizen intended to sell or rent the property which he/she/they owned for use as a house of prostitution or a meth lab, the property owner would be stopped from making the arrangement.
- To name a few, Virginia, Oklahoma City, and Utah have found ways to prevent the creation of ICE centers on privately owned properties within the targeted jurisdiction.

Howard County cannot in any way support the attacks on law, on civil rights, and on the sanctity of any human life which these people will bring with them by allowing them to own or occupy property within its jurisdiction.

I urge you to vote in favor of Council Bill 16-2026 and/or to create the legislation necessary to keep them from gaining a foothold of any kind.

Yours respectfully,  
Carol Zervas

**CB 16-2026**

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**From** cwbaumgart@gmail.com [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 8:08 AM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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I want to let you know I support the proposal to stop ice from opening detention centers in Howard county. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Karen Baumgart Columbia resident

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**Ban privately owned ICE detention center on 6522 block of Meadowridge Road in Elkridge**

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**From** Easy Stuff [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 7:02 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Hello,

I'm a Howard county resident and constituent, and I'm emailing about the privately owned ICE detention center that's being constructed at 6522 block of Meadowridge Road in Elkridge. I'm very concerned about this privately owned ICE detention center, and the negative effects (safety, home values, etc.) it will have on our Meadowridge Landing neighborhood. I'm imploring you to ban this privately owned ICE detention center, and any other privately owned ICE detention centers in Howard county.

Sincerely,  
Ed G.  
Concerned Meadowridge Landing neighborhood resident

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**Proposed Bill re ICE detention Facilites in Howard Count7**

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**From** Eileen Tennor [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 10:40 AM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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February 3, 2026

Dear Councilmember:

My name is Eileen Tennor and I am a resident of District 4.

I am writing to urge you to advance the emergency legislation introduced February 2, 2026, by County Executive Calvin Ball, a bill in favor of banning privately owned detention centers in Howard County.

Privately run detention facilities associated with ICE raise serious concerns about oversight, human rights, and community safety that do not align with our community's values of fairness, transparency, and inclusion.

Thank you for your service to our community and your consideration of this issue. I will appreciate your support and will follow the bill closely.

Eileen Tennor

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**ICE Detention Center**

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**From** Heather Hill [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 7:14 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Good evening,

I am a lifetime Howard county resident, currently residing in Elkridge. I am writing to support the legislation that would exclude ICE detention centers from our county.

Thank you,  
Heather Hill

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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## Testimony in FAVOR of CB 16-2026

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From Jayanti Dasgupta [REDACTED]  
Date Tue 2/3/2026 7:32 PM  
To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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To the esteemed members of the Howard County Council:

I am a resident of Howard County, and am writing to thank you for introducing CB 16-2026 for hearing on February 4, and to support its passage.

I am a wife, daughter, friend, and physician to immigrants to this country and to this county. 22-23% of our Howard County population is comprised of immigrants, with many more identifying as first-generation Americans, like myself. I was born and raised in the United States, but before attending the February 2nd session at which this legislation was introduced, I triple checked my bag for my passport, and those of my husband and children.

The uncertainty that motivates me, as a person of color watching the events unfolding in our country, to carry proof of citizenship in public spaces is minimal in comparison to the fears of my neighbors who speak English with foreign accents, those who are refugees or asylum seekers, and those who live, work, raise families, and often pay taxes in our county without the documentation they would need to access benefits such as SNAP or Medicaid.

The creation of an ICE detention center here in Howard County would justifiably amplify these fears, create legitimate safety concerns for ALL residents related to an increased presence of armed, masked, unidentified agents, and discourage many people from leaving our homes for work, school, medical care, and everyday tasks that stimulate the economy, like buying groceries and putting gas in our cars. We have seen communities of color terrorized, seemingly without regard for individual citizenship statuses, in other areas of the country, and have no reason to think things would be different here.

I am proud to live and serve in a diverse, beautiful, and inclusive community such as ours, and encourage you to continue protecting all residents of our county by passing this emergency legislation to prohibit permits for privately owned buildings in Howard County to be operated as detention centers.

Thank you,  
Jayanti Dasgupta, MD

Sent from my iPhone

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**CB16-2016**

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**From** Jessica Estrogano [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 9:38 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>  
**Cc** Email - Mine <benestrogano@gmail.com>; Jones, Opel <ojones@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear Howard County Councilmembers,

I am writing to express my strong support for CB16-2016, an emergency act to amend the Howard County Building Code to ensure that only a government agency may apply for, obtain, or hold a permit for an I-3 Use Group, and to authorize the building official to suspend or revoke permits, other than those issued to a government agency, that have not passed final inspection.

This legislation is a necessary and prudent safeguard for public safety and accountability. I-3 Use Group facilities, by their nature, involve the confinement of individuals and therefore demand the highest level of oversight, transparency, and regulatory control. Limiting permit eligibility for these facilities to government agencies ensures that responsibility for their construction, inspection, and operation remains with entities directly accountable to the public.

Additionally, granting the building official clear authority to suspend or revoke permits that have not passed final inspection strengthens enforcement of the building code and helps prevent the use or continued development of facilities that do not meet required safety standards. This authority is especially critical in the context of I-3 facilities, where failures in compliance can have serious and even fatal consequences for occupants, staff, and the broader community.

Declaring this legislation an emergency act is appropriate. Clarifying the County's regulatory authority without delay protects the public interest and prevents gaps in enforcement that could otherwise be exploited.

I urge the Council to support and pass CB16-2016 and to continue prioritizing public safety, responsible governance, and strong regulatory oversight in Howard County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Jessica Estrogano

Howard County District 2 Resident

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**Opposition to the Detention Center for Immigration and Customs Enforcement**

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**From** Joana C [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 7:02 PM  
**To** Ball, Calvin <cball@howardcountymd.gov>; CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Good evening,

I am a resident of Howard County writing to express my opposition to the proposed detention center at 6522 Meadowridge Road in Elkridge.

I am concerned about the impact it will have on our community, and the humanitarian issues associated with detention facilities. I do not believe this project reflects the values or priorities of our residents, nor is it the best use of public resources.

I support the emergency legislation, Council Bill 16-2026.

Thank you,

Joana

**Council bill 16-2026**

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**From** John\_Jackie Stanford [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 10:11 AM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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We support this bill. We do not support ICE nor any other private detention centers in Howard County.

John and Jacqueline Stanford  
Residents of Columbia, Md.

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**Council Bill-16-2026**

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From jp4000@verizon.net [REDACTED]  
Date Tue 2/3/2026 5:48 PM  
To Ball, Calvin <cball@howardcountymd.gov>; CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Honorable Mr. Calvin Ball,

I thank you for providing information regarding the proposed Subject Bill. I am a retired federal law enforcement officer with more than 30 years of and have been a resident of Howard County for nearly 25 years.

I do not agree with those who criticize Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for doing what Congress has authorized them to do for the past 22 years. It is their responsibility to remove from the US, those who have no legal status to be here. They are trying to focus on those who exacerbated their illegal status by committing felonies (human trafficking, rape, murder, child molestation, etc.). However, anyone who does not have legal status is subject to deportation. This is not cruel. It is the law. Additionally, the current administration has offered free flights and a fair monetary sum for illegal aliens (including all in their family) to leave the US voluntarily with the option to apply for legal status to come back.

ICE does not require State and Local authorities to enforce immigration laws. All State and Local authorities need to do is notify ICE when an illegal alien is in custody for an alleged crime so ICE can affect a safe and effective arrest. By not notifying ICE in these situations, State and Local authorities put the general public at risk, first by the release of these individuals back into society and second by causing ICE agents to flood the zone to locate them in neighborhoods, retail stores, hospitals, and in some cases, schools. I blame this failure to cooperate by State and Local governments for the deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti. Had Minneapolis authorities worked with ICE to capture illegal aliens, while they were in detention, Ms. Good and Mr. Pretti would still be alive. They put themselves in harm's way by interfering and obstructing ICE officers doing in public that which should have been done at a local jail.

I believe that while your position on this issue is sincere, it is misguided. By calling out the address of a building to be used to house federal employees, you put the owners of the building at risk of attack, both physically and through social media. This proposed bill is singling out a group of people based on a legal occupation. In what universe is this not illegal discrimination?

I strongly opposed Bill 16-2026.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Joseph Palazzo

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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**ICE Detention Center in Elkridge**

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**From** Kathy Petersen [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 1:39 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Howard County Council Members and Dr. Ball,

As a long time resident of HOCO I want to express my great dismay that such a facility would be in our county. This is not who we are as a community. I support any and all efforts to make sure such a facility never finds a home in our county.

Thank you for all you are doing to speak out against it and to ensure that the facility does not happen now or anytime in the future.

Regards,  
Kathy Petersen

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Thank you for advancing the emergency bills to block the attack on our people**

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**From** Laurie S. Coltri [REDACTED] >  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 4:09 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear Council Members,

I am writing to thank you for advancing the emergency legislation that declares federal detention facilities to be against public policy, and I urge you to do whatever is necessary not to cooperate with the current fascists who are trying to kidnap, harm, and even murder the people of Howard County.

I am a white woman in my 70s, and come from a place of relative privilege. (You may have seen me Monday night in the front row - I was the one with the short silver hair and the shiny multicolor puff jacket. Everybody notices that jacket!)

I categorically oppose ANY continuation of the violent, unconstitutional, and cruel attack against and detention of people by the ICE. ICE are patently, by their actions, domestic terrorists, doing the will of the master fascists who hold the federal government hostage right now. And those for whom ICE are their instrument are dismantling any semblance of the liberal democracy we had moved toward for most of my life. It is unbearably sad.

Our country has never been perfect, but in my lifetime there has never been a time such as this, when so much of what had made America great has been bludgeoned and axed. There is no more fundamental cause in your work as stewards of our county than to resist what is happening, and to restore and protect a local government which maintains the compassionate, just, and equitable treatment of all people, of all ages, backgrounds and colors, within our boundaries. Every child in Howard County is, in our hearts, my grandchild, and yours.

I never expected my Golden Years to look anything like this, but I will stand in the trenches with you, if you will stand with us.

With gratitude,

Laurie Coltri, Thunder Hill

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**I support both CB16 and CB17**

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**From** Linfeng Chen [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 10:14 AM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear County Council,

My name is Linfeng Chen from North Laurel. As an immigrant, I cannot stay silent while the current ICE operations cause fear and harm in our community. Regardless of whether you are a U.S. citizen, a green card holder, or an undocumented immigrant, we are facing the same threat when executive power is exercised without limits. What we are witnessing is inhumane and out of control. The Renee Good and Alex Pretti incidents are not isolated moments, they are warning signs of an enforcement system being used recklessly and for political gain, with real people paying the price. Detentions without due process and without judicial warrants undermine the rule of law and open the door to abuse. Howard County must stand for humanity, dignity, fairness, and the rule of law. All people are created equal. Please pass CB16-2026 and CB17-2026. Thank you!

Linfeng Chen, PhD

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For A STRONGER AND SAFER COMMUNITY  
DEMOCRAT FOR DISTRICT 4 HOWARD COUNTY  
Email [Chen4d4@gmail.com](mailto:Chen4d4@gmail.com)  
Website [Chen4d4.org](http://Chen4d4.org)  
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/chen4d4>  
Integrity + Inclusion + Innovation

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**Council Bill 16-2026**

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**From** Lisa Horton [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 7:25 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong support of this bill to prevent the placement of detention centers in Howard County. One of the reasons I have enjoyed living in Howard County for the last 30 years is the diversity of its residents. The presence of ICE detention centers here is anathema to this county's commitment to immigrants and citizens of the world. These citizens contribute to the economy and rich culture of our community and ICE detention centers, particularly since the inhumane treatment of the detainees in these centers has been well-documented, have no place in Howard County. I cannot attend the February 3 meeting, but I wanted to voice my extreme displeasure about this. I will do whatever I can to support this bill so please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Horton, M.D.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Support of CB 16-2026

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**From** Margaret Dolan-Drenning [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 1:15 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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County Council of Howard County,

I'm writing to voice my support for CB 16-2026, a bill banning privately held, for profit detention centers in Howard County, MD.

Please stand firmly against private, for profit detention facilities in Howard County.

These facilities go against everything Howard County values, including civility, inclusiveness and respect for all people.

Thank you,  
Margaret Dolan-Drenning

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Support for Council Bill 16-2026**

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**From** Mary Cecere [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 9:49 AM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to formally express my support for Council Bill 16-2026 which will prohibit the permitting of privately-owned buildings operating as detention centers in Howard County. Our county should be a place that welcomes all and deters the crimes against humanity set forth by this federal government.

Sincerely,  
Mary Cecere  
Ellicott City, MD

## No I.C.E. Detention Centers in HoCo!

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**From** Maureen Murphy [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 5:54 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Please DO NOT allow I.C.E. to put a detention center in Elkridge, or ANYWHERE in Howard County. We do NOT want Minnesota-like protests here!

The proposed Elkridge location is accessed through a residential neighborhood. Armed, masked thugs wearing camouflage DO NOT belong on our streets.

mfm

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**Private Detention Center**

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**From** Melinda Utt [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 9:25 AM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear County Council and Dr. Ball,  
I absolutely do **not** want a private detention center in our county. I have lived here for 50 years by choice. I vote and have served as an election judge. I love this county and do not want it degraded by a privately run holding pen. I believe in human rights of all people, regardless of status. This detention center is opposed to our nation's declaration of independence, constitution and bill of rights.  
*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*

Please, please do all you can to oppose this abomination.  
Sincerely,  
Melinda Utt

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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**Support for CB16-2026 and CB172026**

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**From** Monica O'Connor [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 4:20 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear members,

I am a Howard County resident - and like many people nationwide I am horrified by the actions of our Federal Government's Immigration policy. It is clear that the antidote to our government's cruelty and lawlessness is for good people across this nation to stand up and say enough.

I was in the crowd at the County Council building last on February 2, unable to enter because we exceeded fire codes! This is how we win back decency and democracy.

I am grateful and proud that Howard County will revoke the permit for the would be ICE detention camp in Elkridge - and prohibit detention camps for profit going forward. I am grateful and proud that the council will vote to ensure that all county agencies will treat every person in Howard County with dignity, decency and humanity. I am proud that Howard County was highlighted on the Rachel Maddow Show last night - as yet another place in America where people are standing on the right side of history. I am actively sending our news to my family and friends across this country - because courage and righteousness breed courage and righteousness.

Thank you for your favorable votes on CB16 and CB17. We are stronger together.

Respectfully,

Monica Oconnor  
Ellicott City

**Bill 16-2026**

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**From** nwhitelock@verizon.net [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 11:49 AM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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To: The Howard County Council

Reference: Council Bill 16-2026

I emphatically agree that this bill should be approved immediately by the Council .

Nancy Whitelock  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Testimony for CB16 & 17

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**From** Rachel Teti [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 11:47 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

 1 attachment (281 KB)  
HCC Testimony.pages;

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To whom it may concern:

I am a resident of Howard County & have attached a short written testimony regarding my support for CB16 & CB17. Thank you!

Rachel Teti  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Feb 3, 2026

Rachel Teti  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

My name is Rachel Teti. I have been a resident of Howard County for about two years, and a resident of Maryland for twenty-five years. I am writing today in favor of CB16-2026 and CB17-2026 and to urge the council to continue to take actions to protect the residents of the county from federal overreach and the violence and terror that federal agents have brought with them in places like Minneapolis, Portland, and other cities around the country.

I am sure you have all seen the videos and read the stories: ICE and CBP are harassing & kidnapping people who look non-white, including citizens and immigrants with legal status; they are using force against and even killing peaceful protestors and observers; and they are detaining people in detention centers and camps in overcrowded, inhumane conditions which they allow very little oversight into. This is immoral, un-American, and antithetical to who we are in Howard County. The environment of fear which ICE creates wherever it goes would be disastrous to cities like Columbia, where so many of my neighbors, local business owners and employees, fellow parishioners, and friends are people of color and/or immigrants. I believe we must do everything we can to keep these federal agents out of the county and prevent their trampling of our rights and harassment of our people.

I hope that CB16 will help to prevent the establishment of the proposed ICE detention center in Elkridge and any future such projects. Oversight has been prevented at many of these facilities, which is disturbing on its own, but reports that have been made public (such as the recent video-leaked from the ICE detentions center in Baltimore) show appalling conditions. I do not want a concentration camp in my country, let alone my county. I hope that the county will pair CB16 with other measures to protect us — such as publicly stating that ICE activity is not allowed in Howard County schools, government buildings, and public institutions — as well as working with the state government to prohibit ICE enforcement that violates civil and human rights. CB17 is a good start to this, and I hope to see additional measures soon to protect our county.

Thank you for your time.

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**Support for Council Bills CB16-2026, CB-17-2026: Protect us from ICE**

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From LightShineBright2 [REDACTED]

Date Tue 2/3/2026 4:29 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>; Ball, Calvin <cball@howardcountymd.gov>; CouncilDistrict4@howardcountymd.gov <CouncilDistrict4@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear Council Member Deb Jung (District 4), Howard County Council, and Dr. Ball,

As your constituent, I thank you for your actions regarding two emergency bills, one from Dr. Calvin Ball (CB16-2026) and co-sponsored by Opel Jones, Deb Jung, Christiana Rigby, and Liz Walsh. I appreciated Dr. Ball's Monday speech announcing the emergency legislation.

Also, I thank Council Member Liz Walsh for the submission of CB17-2026.

I strongly urge the passing and implementation of both bills, CB16-2026 and CB-17-2026, to protect our neighbors and community from the lawless acts of ICE and its seeking to open private detention centers in Howard County.

Such facilities are a public health and safety threat. In addition to denying due process and human rights to detainees, conditions at ICE detention centers are cruel and inhumane. Private detention centers profit from such conditions. All are attempting to operate without transparency or accountability. These centers pose great risks to the people living near them in regards to public health and safety. For example, the Dilly detention center in Texas is presently under quarantine due to a measles outbreak among the children detained there. ICE agents operating near detention centers are masked, anonymous, and threatening. We refuse to allow such detention facilities close to local schools, medical facilities, parks, and public facilities.

The lawless actions of ICE killed various people as federal immigration agents attempted to arrest and detain people as well as stop legal observations. Wearing masks, agents act even more brutally without accountability. Masked individuals without badges and identification bring greater risks to our community especially near schools, primary care health centers, parks, shopping centers, and neighborhoods.

Please pass and implement both bills, CB16-2026 and CB-17-2026, to protect our neighbors and community from the lawless acts of ICE and its seeking to open private detention centers in Howard County.

Thank you for your support and quick actions to protect our people,

Rebecca Groff

Email: [REDACTED]

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**Written testimony for 2/4/26 emergency meeting**

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**From** Sarah Vanderwagen [REDACTED]

**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 9:27 PM

**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>; CouncilDistrict4@howardcountymd.gov  
<CouncilDistrict4@howardcountymd.gov>

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Good Evening. My name is Sarah Vanderwagen, I am a lifelong Howard County resident and currently live in District 4. I am a pediatric nurse with Johns Hopkins, taking care of Maryland's children since 2005.

In this moment, I wanted to share an experience I had recently at work. Though I work currently in Baltimore, this particular patient is a fellow Howard County resident. My patient is a kind, delightful 9 year-old, who lives with a severe, painful, and life limiting autoimmune disease. To keep her symptoms under control and allow her the best quality of life possible she requires two days of eight hour IV infusions of immune modulating medication approximately every two weeks. Though the treatments are uncomfortable., this young lady loves to come for her infusions and spend the day with us doing arts and crafts, while bonding with other children who are being treated for chronic medical conditions.

She lives with her parents and her dog, and attends an HCPSS elementary school when she is well enough to go. Her family members are all green card holders from a Central American country, who immigrated to the USA 2.5 years ago.

Her mother shared that the family is now terrified each and every day that they will somehow be detained or arrested. She reports frequent nightmares about her daughter being deported and not able to receive her medical treatment.

That afternoon when our uniformed security guard made his routine rounds checking on us, my patient and her mother visibly jumped when he came around the corner and into their line of sight. Her heart rate shot up on the pulse oximeter, and took a long time to normalize.

I share this for the purpose of providing testimony and requesting legislation preventing any immigration enforcement investigation or activity at or in the vicinity of any healthcare facilities, so that patients like mine feel safe while receiving medical care.

As James Baldwin famously said "The children are always ours, every single one of them; all over the globe; and I am beginning to suspect that whoever is incapable of recognizing this may be incapable of humanity."

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance, and thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Best,

Sarah B Vanderwagen, RN BSN



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Re: B16-2016 and B17-2016

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From Sharon Schwemin [REDACTED]  
Date Tue 2/3/2026 6:03 PM  
To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Hello —

I want to be on the record

- No private detention centers in Howard County,  
and
- Keep ICE off County properties, out of County contracts, and provide both County employees and local businesses with info about how to handle interactions with ICE.

Thank you for acting on this! If only Congress could do the same (with this, and so much else).

Sharon Schwemin  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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## Proposed ICE Detention Center in Elkridge

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**From** Thomas Baxter [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 4:05 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>  
**Cc** Martha Baxter <powerno@comcast.net>

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Good afternoon —

I tried to attend your meeting last night, but the parking lot was filled beyond overflow. It looked well-attended (hundreds of people standing outside with signs, waiting to get in), so I returned home. I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments today by email.

I fully support **both** the County's revocation of the building permit for 6522 Meadowridge Road in Elkridge **and** passage of Council Bill 16-2026, the emergency legislation to prohibit the permitting of privately-owned buildings to operate as detention centers in Howard County.

I absolutely support Howard County government actions to prevent the acquisition of an immigrant detention and processing facility for DHS in this county. Detention and deportation of law-abiding, productive immigrants is absolutely terrible policy — it's destructive to our values, our humanity, our trust in government, our international reputation and influence, and our economy. It's stupid; don't let it happen.

Here's why:

It's true that millions of people from other parts of the world have entered the United States illegally and without documentation -- totally due to the willful failure of our own government (Congress) to enact legislation to manage immigration effectively, responsibly, and rationally. As a result, we have millions of undocumented people from other parts of the world living and working productively in the United States, doing work that Americans won't do and contributing to our economy and GDP.

It is not stupid for the Federal Government to know who is within our borders and whether they represent a threat or not — just ask the survivors of the thousands who died on September 11, 2001. A rational solution would be to register every one of those people who entered illegally and monitor them until we know if they are friend or foe. (Registration should expressly not involve detention and incarceration.) They would pay a fee to support that monitoring, and then would also pay income and the other taxes the rest of us pay to support the government, national retirement and health care programs, and have access to medical care. Some percentage of those people will break laws and hurt

people — just like in the population who were born here or are in the U.S. legally. The existing judicial and law enforcement system is capable of dealing with that criminal activity, and it's more effective than deportation (which is often another form of catch-and-release).

But what we are seeing is two Federal agencies (ICE and CBP) that are operating outside the law and with no accountability -- inflicting brutal state-supported terrorism upon the entire domestic population, often in violation of Constitutional rights, often wrongly against mis-identified people, often inflicting injuries (or worse) on people who have the right to protest government actions that are illegal or offensive to their values, often tearing families apart and making orphans of traumatized US-born children, and too occasionally lethal.

Howard County should not be a party to that kind of Federal overreach and lawlessness, and opposing a DHS detention center where we can is the right thing to do. Will there be Federal reaction as a result? Maybe, but upholding our values and rights is worth it.

Thank you.

T.S. Baxter  
Columbia

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**Testimony in support of CB16 and CB17.**

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**From** tahira HUSSAIN [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 5:00 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Respected Council members

I Tahira Mussarat Hussain resident of 11708 pindell chase drive fulton MD20759

I am writing this testimony to support CB 16 and CB17

and we community and residents of Howard county support action of our county Executive Calvin Ball.

I commend County Executive Ball & local leaders in Howard Co for working to block ICE's attempt to set up another detention facility in Maryland.

We saw the inhumanity of ICE's operation in Baltimore & Marylanders have made it clear we do not want these facilities in our state. As our county executive Dr. Calvin ball said

*“Our strength comes from people of different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences choosing to call this place home. And, I believe, deeply and unequivocally, that the civil rights of all our residents must be protected. We will continue to stand firm against any criminalization of our residents based on immigration status, race, ethnicity, or any other protected characteristic under our laws.”* **Calvin Ball** Howard County Executive

we dont want any private detention center in howard county Maryland.

This emergency legislation by County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball to prohibit the permitting of privately owned facilities operating as detention centers in Howard County. i strongly support this legislation.

Thank you so much

Tahira Mussarat Hussain

[REDACTED]  
Resident of howard county for 32 years

## Support for Emergency Bill 16-2026

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**From** TOMI T [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 2/3/2026 7:22 PM  
**To** CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>  
**Cc** Ball, Calvin <cball@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for Emergency Bill 16-2026, which would prohibit the permitting of privately owned buildings operating as detention centers intended for use by ICE in Howard County.

This legislation reflects the values of our community and affirms Howard County's commitment to public safety, transparency, and human dignity. Allowing private detention facilities creates serious concerns about accountability, oversight, and the treatment of individuals held within them. These facilities are often profit driven and operate with limited public scrutiny, which is inconsistent with the standards our county should uphold.

Emergency Bill 16-2026 sends a clear message that Howard County will not support the expansion of private detention operations that place our vulnerable neighbors at risk and undermine community trust. I appreciate the Council's leadership in taking proactive action on this issue and urge you to vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you for your service and for listening to the voices of your constituents.

Sincerely,  
Tomi Thompson

Sent from my iPad