



## **SB0478 Correctional Services - Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)**

Presented to the Honorable Will Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
February 10, 2021 1:00 p.m.

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### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the Finance Committee to issue **a favorable report on SB0478 Correctional Services - Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)**, sponsored by Senator William C. Smith.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice which are routinely violated in immigration detention centers. Disturbing reports of forced sterilization, reproductive coercion, and denied medical care are clear violations of our organization's core values.

Private detention centers wrongly continue to profit off of the detention of foreign migrants by renting out their space to ICE. The financial incentivization to detain individuals is at its core already a malicious practice. However, in combination with the routine reproductive right violations, our organization cannot support the creation of more privately-run detention systems which will not abide by national medical care standards. SB0478 seeks to ban any new contracts or renewals of existing contracts with detention facilities operated by private corporations, ensures that the Marylanders be informed about plans for any new private detention facility to allow for public comment, and requires local entities that already have an existing immigration detention agreement to terminate the contract.

Disturbing reports of forced sterilizations, denied access to timely pregnancy-related healthcare, inadequate medical care, and unsafe conditions are among some of the gross human rights violations that have transpired in for-profit detention centers across the country. The American Civil Liberties Union recently published a report covering reproductive abuse in detention centers. Detailed in the report was a story of a detention center in Georgia where a former nurse employed at the facility reported rampant forced sterilizations among other forms of medical neglect.<sup>1</sup> In February of 2019, a 24-year old Honduran immigrant was denied access to medical care at one of these facilities and entered premature labor resulting in a stillbirth.<sup>2</sup> This devastating maternal health outcome could have been avoided if it hadn't been for the center's neglect and disregard for the health and safety of their detainees. These reports are among only some of the many that have come to light in recent years.

Reproductive abuses in for-profit detention centers are a violation of reproductive health, rights and justice. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on SB0478**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> "ACLU News & Commentary," American Civil Liberties Union, September 23, 2020, <https://www.aclu.org/news/immigrants-rights/reproductive-abuse-is-rampant-in-the-immigration-detention-system/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.