



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**Expedited Bill 13-26 Building Permits-Immigration Detention Facility (ICE OUT ACT)
SUPPORT**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)**. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials. For more than 70 years, WDC has advocated for law and policy to improve the lives of women and their families.

We are writing to express our strong support for **Bill 13-26, Building Permits-Immigration Detention Facility (ICE OUT ACT)**. This Act will prohibit the use of both new and existing buildings as privately-owned detention facilities in Montgomery County by altering the code for building permits. We support legislation that prevents the development of new immigrant detention centers in any county or municipality in Maryland. Currently, there are no fully operational, long-term federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers in Maryland. ICE uses local jails to hold detained individuals and operates short-term holding facilities in Salisbury and Baltimore. The Baltimore facility is reported to detain individuals in [inhumane conditions](#).

Recently, the federal government purchased a warehouse in Washington County, Maryland, to convert into a long-term detention facility. To preemptively stop a similar situation from happening in Montgomery County, **Bill 13-26** seeks to prohibit the issuance of building permits or use-and-occupancy permits for immigration detention facilities. A similar approach was applied in Howard County, Maryland, in response to a plan by ICE to retrofit an Elkridge office building as an ICE facility. In response to that plan, [the Howard County Council passed emergency legislation that prevents privately-owned buildings from being used as a detention center](#).

Other states and jurisdictions have taken analogous steps to either block or stop expansion of ICE detention facilities by regulating where and how such facilities can be created. Specifically, the New Mexico Immigrant Safety Act (2026) effectively [prevents public facilities from being repurposed for immigration detention](#). Additionally, Kansas City, Missouri, passed a resolution in January 2026 that [prohibited construction of immigration detention facilities in the city for five years](#). These laws, resolutions, and bills are tests of whether unwanted privately-run prisons are to be allowed in a city, county, or state's backyard.

WDC applauds the County Council and County Executive Elrich in leading efforts to protect Montgomery County immigrant residents—our family, friends and neighbors—against a cruel and lawless federal regime.

We strongly support Bill 13-26 and urge its swift passage.

Cynthia Rubenstein
WDC President

Alison O'Brien
WDC Immigration Subcommittee

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy Chair