



**Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Response to CB51 Veto**

The Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice (HCCIJ) strongly denounces the veto of CB-51-2020 issued by Dr. Ball, and we call into question County Executive Ball's assertion that the detainees benefit from us working with ICE. Our county should not profit from implementing the racist acts of terrorism committed by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Our complicity with ICE creates a barrier between the immigrant residents of this county and further causes fear of our police and government agencies. Now more than ever, we should stand together as our community faces a pandemic and a country divided by hate.

Dr. Ball's repeated mischaracterization of the detainees as violent criminals has furthered the stereotype that Brown and Black people are dangerous and the "once a criminal, always a criminal" mentality that has been used to incite fear of people of color. Everyone in the Jessup detention center is there for a civil immigration violation, not for a crime. If they had ever been convicted of a crime, they have already served their complete sentence. They should not be punished a second time for being an immigrant.

By providing beds for ICE, we are participating in their systematic terror and the tearing apart of families. ICE could choose other options that are less destructive to families such as check-ins or ankle monitoring. We do not have to participate in this system. Let's join Montgomery, Prince George's, Baltimore, and Anne Arundel counties who have all chosen not to cooperate with ICE.

Keeping detainees in detention while they await hearings prevents them from being with their families, working, and building their legal defense. As local immigration attorney Arlene Grant explained at our coalition's press conference last week, "there are highly effective alternatives to detention, that also allow attorneys to represent people wherever they are." If County Executive Ball truly cared about making Howard County an inclusive community that dismantles systemic racism, he would choose not to profit off of the incarceration of Brown and Black people. We thank Liz Walsh for leading on CB51 and Deb Jung, and Christiana Rigby for supporting this bill. We encourage Dr. Ball, Dr. Jones, and Mr. Yungmann to look deeply into their own hearts, and to listen to their constituents, to be just as strong.