



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Catalina Rodriguez Lima, Director, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA)
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	April 24, 2026
SUBJECT	Council Bill 26-0157 Private Detention Centers – Citywide Ban

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

Council Bill 26-0157 amends Article 32 (Zoning) of the Baltimore City Code to explicitly prohibit private detention centers in all zoning districts across the city. The proposed bill seeks to add “private detention centers” to the list of uses prohibited citywide. In addition, the bill establishes a clear definition of “private detention center,” including facilities operated by private entities under government contracts for incarceration or detention purposes. Finally, the bill clarifies that private detention centers are not considered government facilities or residential-care facilities under zoning definitions.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) supports Council Bill 26-0157, which establishes a clear, citywide prohibition on private detention centers through Baltimore's zoning code. Privately operated detention facilities, particularly those tied to federal immigration enforcement, have been associated nationally with reduced transparency and accountability. Prohibiting these facilities helps strengthen trust between residents and local government, an essential component of effective public safety.

Baltimore has long prioritized equity, inclusion, and the protection of vulnerable communities, including immigrants. This bill reinforces those commitments by ensuring that land use policy does not enable practices that may undermine civil rights or due process. Moreover, the intent of this bill is consistent with that of House Bill 1017, passed during the Maryland General Assembly's 2026 legislative session. Cementing this restriction at the local level echoes the state legislature's stance toward private detention facilities, while affording safeguards independent of any potential shifts at the state level.

Council Bill 26-0157 aligns with MIMA's mission to advance the well-being of immigrant families in Baltimore City and represents a proactive step toward safeguarding community trust

and dignity.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill is not expected to have a direct fiscal impact on MIMA.

AMENDMENTS