

# Advocates Celebrate Winning Multi-Year Campaign to End Howard County's ICE Contract to Detain Immigrants

Community activism leads to County Executive Calvin Ball's policy change, ending the county's collaboration with ICE and its enforcement of unjust federal immigration policies

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**Howard County, Maryland**—Founded in 2019, the Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice (HCCIJ) includes more than 20 non-profit, grassroots, immigrant, civil rights advocacy groups, and faith-based organizations dedicated to advancing immigrant rights and protections and ending Howard County's participation in the amoral activities of U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE). County Executive Calvin Ball's announcement of the termination of the County's Intergovernmental Service Agreement (IGSA) with ICE is a huge victory.

"We have worked for nearly two years to end Howard County's contract with ICE and to bring about progressive legal change for immigrants," **said Thais Moreira of Conexiones**. "Our coalition has held demonstrations, testified at public meetings and hearings, collected thousands of petition signatures from community members, mounted social media campaigns, held vigils, and met repeatedly with elected officials. We are proud that our efforts have succeeded. Organizing works!"

For decades, Howard County has detained thousands of immigrants in its county detention center through its contract with ICE, leading to racial profiling, arrests for civil immigration violations, deportation, and family separation. Now, this long legacy of injustice is coming to an end.

"Our work has made a difference," **said Anna Rubin from Columbia Jewish Congregation**. "We have made community members and elected officials take notice. Justice for immigrants has become a public priority."

HCCIJ members have advocated for legislation and policy changes to ensure civil rights for immigrants. These efforts led to the successful passage of the Howard County Liberty Act in 2020 and to the Human Rights Commission designating immigration status as a protected class. Earlier legislation sponsored by Councilwoman Liz Walsh to end the ICE contract passed the Council, but was vetoed by Council Executive Calvin Ball.

“Today’s announcement that County Executive Ball will cancel the ICE contract is a tremendous victory for the Coalition and for every resident of Howard County, **said Leslie Salgado, leader of Friends of Latin America and former member of the Howard County Human Rights Commission.** “We are making progress in achieving Howard County’s stated commitment to ‘eradicate discrimination, increase equal opportunity, and protect and promote human rights.”

***The Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice includes:***

*ACLU of Maryland, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, CASA, Channing Memorial Church, Chinese-American Network for Diversity and Opportunity (CAN-DO), Columbia Democratic Club, Columbia Jewish Congregation, Conexiones, Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), Community Allies of Rainbow Youth, Doctors for Camp Closure, Friends of Latin America, Friends Committee on Immigration and Refugees, Howard County Board of Rabbis, Indian Cultural Association of Howard County, Indivisible HoCoMD – Immigration Action Team, Jews United for Justice, Our Revolution Howard County, Patapsco Friends Meeting, Sunrise Movement Howard County, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, and Young Socialist Movement*

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