

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB523

From: *Ijeoma Okonkwo – In favor of SB523*

*To: Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee*

At this point, it is clear that there is a severe shortage healthcare worker. This shortage has been further exacerbated by the current Pandemic we are experiencing. During this Pandemic, America, much like other countries around the world have termed their healthcare workers “Super Heroes.” This bill presents a great opportunity to show them the support the nation has theorized. Consequently, I write this letter to support the bill mentioned above for the following reasons.

- As a practicing health professional, I feel the need for more licensed professional on a daily basis. From receiving emails about open shifts that need covered, to working while short staffed. I can mention a few reasons why these are undesirable, with the most important one being patient outcome. When staff are overburdened, there is an increased risk for negative patient outcome, every clinician understands this. Passing this bill will allow more licensed healthcare practitioners to join work force and provide the much-needed relief for overworked healthcare workers.
- Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that the professionals in question here have been trained by American Academic system. Therefore, we can attest to the quality of the education they have received. They have attended American Accredited schools and programs, which qualifies them for board certification exams. Majority of these professional programs have very strict requirements for their criminal records. So, one can appreciate that these individuals are generally Law-Abiding citizens and responsible members of our society. It is also important to mention that these immigrants often had to attain certain Grade Point Average (GPA) to receive admission, and maintain those GPAs while in these professional programs up to the point of graduation. They have also passed board exams which attests to their individual excellence. Thus, one can infer that these are very intelligent students and potentially excellent talents that have not been given the opportunity to shine.
- In addition, immigrants who are allowed to practice in the capacity of their licenses will also be able to contribute towards the economic development of America, not just by utilizing their talents in moving our industries forward, but also financially. If allowed to obtain licensure, these individuals will be practicing in decent income earning professions. This will allow them to contribute their fair share to the growth of our economy.

For these reasons I ask these committee to thoroughly review the components of **SB523**, consider ways it can improve the life of the American people and to pass the bill.