

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 0187:
Health Occupations - Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations - Immigrants**

TO: Honorable Senator Griffith, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Dr. Anna Rubin

DATE: Tuesday, February 3th, 2023

As a daughter of immigrants and a mother to a foreign-born child, my personal story is woven in with the immigrant story. Licensing is pervasive and has contributed positively to a high level of competence in a variety of professions. But while many immigrants pay taxes, they may not have a social security number. When my father immigrated to this country in the 1920s as a young teen, he was immediately able to work, to enter training for the optical profession and then continue training to be an optometrist in the 30s, and then open up a practice. However he didn't obtain a social security number until he was in his forties.

Current Maryland law requires all applicants for health occupational licensure to provide a Social Security Number; however, this requirement is not aligned with what's established constitutionally for licensing authorities, or with Maryland's economic interest, or with national trends, and lastly, it's not aligned with the state's investment in the immigrant community.

I strongly support Senate Bill 0187 as a means of expanding health occupational licensure to our immigrant community for the following reasons:

1. Maryland is home to a large immigrant community. According to the American Immigration Council, one in seven Maryland residents is an immigrant - or, almost one million individuals, comprising 15% of the population. Maryland has made good strides in providing great opportunities to these communities, for example, by expanding in-state tuition and free community college access to all Marylanders, regardless of immigration status.
2. By not allowing all immigrants to have access to health occupational licenses that they are qualified for, the State is losing its investment as businesses lose not only competent labor, but also revenue. According to the Higher Ed Immigration Portal, there are 237,845 undocumented immigrants in the state - 15,485 of them who are DACA eligible. The spending power of just the DACA eligible population is over \$285 million, with a tax contribution of \$36 million.
3. Expanding access to health occupational licensing for immigrants would not only be in the State's best economic interest, but it would align with developments in other states that have expanded access, such as New Jersey—an individual does not need a Social Security Number to apply for licensure there.
4. Occupational licensing boards are not immigration enforcement authorities. They determine if an individual possesses all qualifications to safely serve in a particular profession.

Therefore, Maryland should follow the lead of other states that have removed Social Security Number requirements from health licensing applications, and thus expand the labor pool in our State, and unlock untapped potential for economic growth. **I strongly urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 0187.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Anna Rubin (Emerita, UMBC) 21045

