



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Ariana Kelly, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: February 20th, 2023

RE: HB0454 Health Occupations – Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations – Immigrants

The MLLC supports HB0454 Health Occupations – Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations – Immigrants, 2023

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0454.

In the United States, anywhere from 20 to 25% of college-educated immigrants are severely underemployed.¹ Migration data at the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) suggests that in the US, 15% of internationally trained health/medical graduates are underemployed and 9% of domestically trained health/medical graduates are underemployed.² Additionally, working at the same level as your credentials can be particularly hard in professions like healthcare, which come with onerous and expensive requirements for licensing.³ As a result, “brain waste” is becoming more prevalent because of immigration and education trends, and the lost wages of underemployed migrants in the US amount to nearly \$40 billion each year.⁴ Latino workers are, instead, concentrated in low-wage and low-skilled occupations.⁵ In Maryland, the population of college-educated immigrants has increased 21% between 2010 and 2019, yet they make up 17% of the underemployed share of college-educated workers.⁶

Regarding diversity and representation, there are nearly 60 million Latino people with a wide variety of backgrounds living in the United States, such as those who identify as Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Afro Latinos, those with a mixed heritage, and even a large number of Latinos who identify as white.⁷ Strides must be taken to ensure the adequate representation of both men and women health professionals from racial and ethnic minority communities in the

¹ Ro, C. (2022, February 3). 'Brain waste': The skilled workers who can't get jobs. BBC Worklife. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20220203-brain-waste-the-skilled-workers-who-cant-get-jobs>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Khattar, R., Vela, J., & Roque, L. (2022, July 18). *Latino workers continue to experience a shortage of good jobs*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/latino-workers-continue-to-experience-a-shortage-of-good-jobs/>.

⁶ Batalova, J., & Fix, M. (2021). (rep.). *Leaving Money on the Table: The Persistence of Brain Waste among College-Educated Immigrants*. Migration Policy Institute. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-brain-waste-analysis-june2021-final.pdf>.

⁷ Khattar, Vela, & Roque. *Latino workers continue*.

state. Efforts to increase diversity among the state's health professionals play an important role in addressing health disparities, particularly as Maryland's communities of color continue to grow.⁸ A significant portion of the immigrant community in Maryland comes from Central America and the Caribbean, and almost every Spanish-speaking country is represented in the state.⁹

This bill will reduce brain waste in the state because it prohibits a health occupations board from denying a license, certification, or registration to an immigrant if the individual meets all educational, training, or professional requirements for licensure, certification, or registration. It also mandates each health occupations board to require each applicant for a license to disclose the Social Security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number of the applicant and record the number on the application. The bill allows for immigrants, including DACA recipients and asylum applicants, to apply for health occupational licensure while they are awaiting federal work authorization approval. This allows those who are qualified to work in health occupations to avoid administrative delays when they meet the requirements for health employment in the state by letting their application for licensure run concurrently to their application for work authorization instead of consecutively. This means that as soon as the federal government approves an immigrant's work authorization, they can start work in the health occupations field (for which they meet all other educational and professional requirements) the same day. This will not only give our immigrant health care workers access to the jobs they have been training for, but will help fill critical health care gaps with culturally competent healthcare workers that can serve all of Maryland's populations.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a [favorable] report on HB0454.

⁸ Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, Diversity in the Health Professions (2011). health.maryland.gov. <https://health.maryland.gov/mhhd/Documents/Diversity%20in%20the%20Health%20Professions.pdf>.

⁹ Maryland Latinos Unidos. (2022, May 12). *Latinos in Maryland*. Maryland Nonprofits. <https://www.marylandnonprofits.org/latinos-in-maryland-mlu/>.