



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Secretary

February 9, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 611 – State Board of Nursing – Sunset Extension, Licensure Exceptions, and Board Operations and Membership – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 611 – State Board of Nursing – Sunset Extension, Licensure Exceptions, and Board Operations and Membership. HB 611 will allow the Secretary of Health authority over the Maryland Board of Nursing's infrastructure operations through June 30, 2025. HB 611 also gives authority of the Secretary of Health to employ staff for the Board. Additionally, HB 611 requires the Board to hire a consultant to conduct an independent evaluation of the Board and requires that the terms of certain members of the Board end on certain dates.

The Maryland Board of Nursing (the Board) licenses and regulates over 200,000 nurses. As such, the Board makes up about half of the roughly 400,000 total health occupation board licensees in Maryland. These nurses are the backbone of our state's healthcare delivery system and having a Board that can function efficiently in all of its responsibilities, including administrative processes, is crucial to meeting the needs of Maryland's nurses.

Strengthening the workforce and addressing workforce shortages are a key priority for this Administration. Over the past several years, the Board has faced challenges keeping up with workloads while also performing necessary administrative functions. HB 611 will allow MDH to work with and support the Board of Nursing to improve their administrative and infrastructure operations, while the Board's staff can focus on the Board's core functions including licensing, discipline, investigations, and scope of practice decisions. Addressing the administrative and infrastructure issues with the Board will significantly improve the ability of Maryland's nurses to start or continue their careers in the healthcare industry.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting Secretary