

HB 454: Health Occupations - Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations - Immigrants

Hearing of the House Health and Government Operations Committee, February 22, 2023

Position: Favorable

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Workplace Justice Project works to expand and enforce the right of low-wage workers to receive an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. The PJC **supports HB 454**, which would permit Marylanders to obtain occupational licenses through the use of individual taxpayer identification numbers rather than Social Security numbers.

Maryland faces an increasingly dire shortage of direct care workers, which hurts older adults and people with disabilities.

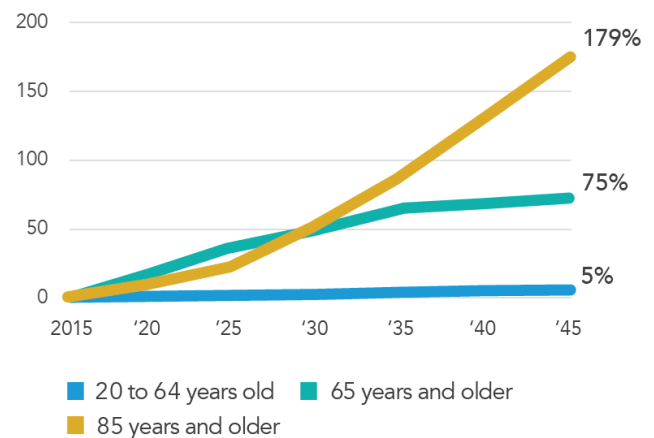
Demand for in-home care is increasing as Maryland becomes an older state and more people with disabilities receive care in their homes rather than nursing homes. A 2018 [study](#) found that Maryland will need 40 percent more care workers over the next ten years.¹ The chart to the right – taken from that study – shows Maryland's projected population growth and underscores the demographics underlying our need for more care workers. But the number of direct care workers is not increasing at a level approaching what is needed to meet our state's growing demand.

HB 454 would remove a barrier preventing many Marylanders from helping meet Maryland's need for more direct care workers.

By allowing workers to obtain an occupational license – such as a Certified Nursing Assistant license – with an individual taxpayer identification number rather than just a Social Security number, the bill would create a pathway for more workers to do these critical jobs. It would also help Maryland workers obtain a greater degree of stability in the formal economy.

For the foregoing reasons, the PJC **SUPPORTS HB 454** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report. Should you have any questions, please call David Rodwin at 410-625-9409 ext. 249.

Figure 2: Projected Population Growth by Age in MD, 2015-2045



¹ PHI, *The Direct Services Workforce in Long-Term Services and Supports in Maryland and the District of Columbia*, 2018, available at <http://phinational.org/resource/the-direct-services-workforce-in-ltss-in-md-and-dc/>. The Public Justice Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and as such does not endorse or oppose any political party or candidate for elected office.