

To: House Health and Governmental Operations Committee

From: Don Graham

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

Date: February 22, 2023

Madame Chair, members of the committee. I'm Don Graham, chairman of Graham Holdings Company and co-founder of a scholarship fund called TheDream.US to support students who are "dreamers". I live in Washington, DC. Our company owns businesses in Maryland including two auto dealerships and the Clyde's Restaurant Group. I was publisher of The Washington Post for 21 years. I have a deep admiration for this state and for everyone who serves in this body

Eight years ago, two friends and I co-founded a scholarship fund for students who are immigrants without documentation, some who have qualified for DACA and others who have not. We've partnered with over 70 colleges including St. Mary's College of Maryland. Morgan State University will become a partner this fall. We've enrolled over 7,000 students and those who've enrolled in four-year colleges have a 76% graduation rate. They came to the United States at an average age of 4.

We've partnered since 2014 with Trinity Washington University, a women's college in Washington that has long served Maryland students. 51 Maryland high school graduates have attended Trinity and I expect 90% will graduate.

Maryland has been generous to dreamers. The state was among the first to give them in-state tuition at state universities and to give them the same state financial aid their high-school classmates get. Every legislator should be thanked for that. But the status of today's immigrant high school graduates has changed. Many of those graduating 10 years ago had DACA, which included a federal work permit. This year, almost no immigrant high-school graduates in Maryland will be granted DACA. They won't have work permits—but by working as entrepreneurs or independent contractors, they can contribute to the workforce and to all of us.

Immigrant students are in Maryland in large numbers and are graduating from college. There is a critical shortage of nurses and other health-care workers in Maryland; among our [Dream.us](https://www.dream.us) students nationally, more major in health careers than in any other field. We'd ask you to open Maryland's health-care licensure examinations to all qualified applicants regardless of immigration status.

I am sure there are Senators who worry that actions helping immigrant students may disadvantage American citizens. This cannot be the case with this legislation. These students can work as contractors for a hospital, a doctor's office or a clinic. They cannot become employees. But by providing badly needed health-care services, they will be benefitting Maryland citizens, who desperately need more nurses and other caregivers.