

TO: The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Jeanette Ortiz
Associate Director, State Affairs

DATE: February 22, 2023

RE: HB454 Health Occupations - Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations - Immigrants

Johns Hopkins supports **HB454 Health Occupations - Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations - Immigrants**. This bill prohibits a State occupational or professional licensing board or other governmental agency in the State from denying a license, certification, or registration based on immigration status. In other words, this bill would permit immigrants that are Maryland residents the opportunity to obtain professional or occupational licensure, given they meet all training and State licensure requirements for their occupation.

Johns Hopkins is supportive of efforts to expand the healthcare workforce which in turn expands access to health care to its patients and citizens across the State. Regrettably, Johns Hopkins continues to experience workforce challenges as the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly strained and overwhelmed our health care system as well as our health care providers. Our staff and health care workers have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic every day, while also ensuring the provision of excellent care to our patients. Allowing immigrants who meet specified criteria to obtain a license, certification, or registration this legislation, while not a panacea, is one tool to help mitigate these workforce shortages. Expanding access to occupational licensure will also provide relief to critical healthcare professions negatively impacted by such labor shortages.

Johns Hopkins is proud of its history of serving and supporting individuals regardless of immigration status. For example, The Access Partnership (“TAP”) of Johns Hopkins Medicine provides access to effective, compassionate, evidence-based primary and specialty care for uninsurable residents of the East Baltimore community surrounding The Johns Hopkins Hospital and Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, with demonstrated financial need. In fact, TAP is the largest and most successful program in the State providing care to undocumented Marylanders. The passage of HB454 could greatly expand the pool of immigrants providing care for underserved communities and our most vulnerable citizens.

Johns Hopkins remains steadfast in its enduring commitment to international students, researchers, and patients. The Johns Hopkins tripartite mission of research, education, and patient care is fueled by an academic community that includes more than 8,000 international students, faculty, and researchers, hailing from more than 120 nations. Immigrants grace every corner of our academic footprint, from

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our most senior leadership positions to resident halls, labs, classrooms, and hospitals. Maryland should look to every common-sense resource available to help address healthcare workforce shortages in the State.

Accordingly, Johns Hopkins respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **HB454**.