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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 380 Favorable Testimony – State Emergency Medical Services Board –
Licenses and Certificates – Application Requirements
February 6, 2024**

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, Colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to present on HB 380 which prohibits the State Emergency Medical Services Board from requiring that an applicant provide proof that the applicant is lawfully present in the United States or has a Social Security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number as a condition for licensure, certification, or registration. **This bill is identical to the process and changes this committee passed into law last year with HB 454 to the Health Occupations and Licenses Board.**

Immigrants make up around 15% of the Maryland's population, according to data from the American Immigration Council, with only 54% of these immigrants being naturalized citizens. Immigrants already make up one-third of healthcare service workers, with over 100,000 immigrants employed in this sector.¹ However, it is estimated that about [263,000 health professionals who were immigrants](#) were unable to work in 2020 due to barriers in licensure.

In my own district, a well-qualified, dedicated young woman, Madely Perezcruz, was prevented from realizing her life's dream of becoming an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and serving as a volunteer supervisor with the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad because she is not a citizen of the United States. Madely will share her disheartening story with the Committee today. Dedicated to her community and committed to securing a future for herself and her family, Madely was forced to abandon her calling.

By continuing to allow individuals who do not possess citizenship to earn professional and occupational licenses we can help address worsening labor shortages in critical fields like emergency health care services. Emergency medical services, including EMTs and paramedics, are facing a staffing shortage reaching near-crisis levels. According to the International

¹ <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-maryland>

City/County Management Association, nationally “45 communities lost their ambulance provider in the past two years”, mostly due to staffing shortages that have not recovered since the covid-19 pandemic.² In Baltimore City, WBAL-TV reports that over 25% of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) positions are unfilled, with “ambulances getting tied up at hospitals with crews waiting as long as 60 to 90 minutes or more to transfer patients.”³ Many municipal and local governments have been forced implement mandatory overtime,⁴ which has caused burnout among emergency medical workers, further exasperating the labor shortage as dissatisfied and overworked employees leave their positions. These issues were also raised by the recent report issued by the *Commission to Advance and Strengthen Firefighting and Emergency Medical Services Within Maryland*.

When these individuals can obtain licenses, it strengthens the state and federal economy as the American Immigration Council reports, “66,350 immigrant business owners generated \$1.7 billion in business income,”⁵ in 2018. They also report it was estimated that Maryland’s immigrant-led households had \$27.6 billion in spending power after tax income.

Expanding the pool of employment for EMS and EMTs to include noncitizens will save lives, as it will assist with alleviating the staffing shortages that plague agencies across the state. And in the case of Ms. Perezcruz, she was restricted from taking on further responsibility despite doing this in a volunteer capacity.

It is important to note that this bill does NOT change any other requirements for licensure and all applicants must still meet the relevant educational and professional requirements. All this bill does is remove the requirement for proof of citizenship. This legislation was also written with the help and support of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), which oversees the EMS Board.

Thank you for your consideration and I would urge a favorable report for HB380.

² <https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/ems-economic-and-staffing-crisis-creates-opportunity-improved-system-design>

³ <https://www.wbalv.com/article/emt-staffing-shortages-baltimore-fire-department-june-30-2023/44399850#:~:text=City%20Fire%20Department,-The%20firefighter's%20union%20is%20again%20sounding%20an%20alarm%2C%20warning%20that,mode%20every%20day%20of%20operatin%20g>

⁴ <https://conduitstreet.mdcountries.org/wp-content/uploads/SB414-Report.pdf>

⁵ [https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-maryland#%3A~%3Atext%3DAs%20consumers%2C%20immigrants%20add%20tens%2C%2Dtax%20income\)%20in%202018](https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-maryland#%3A~%3Atext%3DAs%20consumers%2C%20immigrants%20add%20tens%2C%2Dtax%20income)%20in%202018)