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Opposition to HB0934 - Radiation Therapy, Radiography, Nuclear Medicine Technology, and Radiology Assistance - Limited Licensed Radiologic Technologist

Dear Delegates on the Health and Government Operations Committee,
I am writing to strongly oppose HB0934, currently under consideration in the Maryland General Assembly. I stand as a concerned citizen, licensed Radiologic Technologist, and resident of Maryland. I believe this proposed legislation provides no benefits that would outweigh the risk to our community.

Maryland deserves quality healthcare. Healthcare is not a field that should be neglected when it comes to quality, and passing this bill will do just that. Radiologic technologists go through extensive education that is taught over a two year accelerated program. This education is supplemented with clinical training, and lab classes. The proposed bill does not reach the bare minimum education needed in order to produce a quality radiographer. All state Radiography programs follow a selective admission process. This is a crucial step to maintaining the quality of our healthcare professionals. A limited licensure will prohibit the ability to continue to keep that as our state's healthcare standard.

Radiography is not as vague as it appears to the uneducated eye. Quality imaging is a crucial step in leading to diagnosing a loved one. As a practicing licensed radiographer, I am confident that this is not achievable without the current standard of education. We are oftentimes the first line of care a patient receives, and it is our duty as fully licensed radiographers to ensure the patient is set up on a road to optimal health. This bill was brought forward with intentions to reduce emergency room wait times, urgent care wait times, and to fill the void of short staffing in the profession. The reasons listed do not constitute a disadvancement to this field, and most importantly the standard of healthcare we provide.

Waiting room times that occur in healthcare facilities should never lead to the neglect of quality of care. Facilities throughout the state proudly advertise that they maintain a teamwork based environment. It is severely unethical to point a finger at one healthcare profession while addressing these concerns. The facilities that are publicly favoring this bill are the ones experiencing these issues. Radiographers are not the main reason behind the obstacles that every healthcare profession contributes too. I am a previous employee of Lifebridge Sinai Hospital, and one of the 5 technologists that terminated their employment due to poor, and unsafe work conditions. Sinai is a trauma hospital, and at any moment radiographers have to report to a level one trauma. The trauma bays were often barricaded by stretchers in the emergency room hallway where patients against the Joint Commission Standard received

treatment. As demonstrated, treatment can be delayed for endless reasons, and rarely is it in a healthcare employee's control. However, I am not opposing this bill due to the dehumanizing treatment, and poor work conditions that healthcare employees face on a day to day basis. Radiographers take an oath that stands for as low as reasonably achievable also known as ALARA. This oath puts the safety of our patients when administering ionizing radiation as top priority.

Limited licensed technicians are openly not held to the same standard of fully licensed technologists. When a patient needs an x-ray, there should be no concern that the healthcare professional performing the exam is competent in their field. If we permit this low standard of imaging licensure, it will break the trust we have with our community. Patients do not hesitate to inquire about our education, and experience before moving forward with their exam. I have witnessed patients asking for a technologist that has been in the field for a longer duration than another radiographer. We have to be able to perform any exam regardless of patient condition. Radiography programs provide students with clinical rotations to hospitals, and outpatient facilities. This education standard ensures that a graduating technologist is competent, and can produce quality images regardless of the patient's condition. I graduated from the radiography program at Community College of Baltimore county after completing roughly 1500 clinical hours, and demonstrating competence in all areas of the field. The requirements that are for limited technicians are mediocre, and would oppose a serious safety threat to our community. Administering radiation to produce diagnostic x-rays causes damage to the human tissue. The lack of education would increase all surrounding safety concerns to patients. Radiation can cause cancer, and radiation safety should not be jeopardized to aid wait times and short staffing.

Lastly, this bill has already had a negative impact on the field of radiology. This is an unmeasurable way to undermine the profession that many of us are passionate about. We have spent countless hours away from our families to ensure that we receive an appropriate education to take care of yours. I can say with certainty that this will be detrimental to radiology, and will push fully credentialed technologists to leave healthcare. We will not be continuing our education to modalities. Technologists that left hospitals will not be returning. This will create a shortage that is not fixable, and I urge you to reconsider this bill to keep the eyes of medicine open.