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**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1053: State Board of Nursing - Executive Director
Qualifications
February 27th, 2024**

Chair Peña-Melnyk and esteemed members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, it is my pleasure to come before you and offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 1053: State Board of Nursing - Executive Director Qualifications**. As drafted, the bill required the Maryland Department of Health to study the qualifications of the executive director of the Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON) and make recommendations on whether changes are needed. I have submitted an amendment that eliminates the study, and instead, removes the qualification that the executive director of MBON must be a registered nurse (RN) with a master's degree in nursing, effective July 2025.

Last year, Ernst & Young and the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability both evaluated MBON's infrastructure and operations. The reports confirmed that many of the challenges faced by MBON stemmed from underfunding and understaffing, and since then, MBON has implemented several of the recommendations. One additional recommendation was to eliminate the RN requirement for the executive director of MBON, due to the "substantial clinical, education, examination, and judicial experience and expertise among MBON leadership currently to support a non-RN Executive Director." In changing the code to reflect this recommendation, we are aiming to give MBON the option to appoint an executive director with or without an active RN license, as best meets their needs in the future.

Until July 2025, the Maryland Secretary of Health has the authority to designate the Executive Director of MBON, after which MBON will resume the responsibility. HB1053 does not change this and merely creates the framework for MBON to utilize one of the recommendations made last year. MBON can continue to appoint executive directors with RN licensing.

I urge the committee to give a favorable report to **House Bill 1053: State Board of Nursing - Executive Director Qualifications**. Thank you.