

Testimony in Support of HB0533

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Members of the Economic Matters Committee
C/O Delegate Pena- Melnik

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in support of House Bill 0533, which aims to allow members of the community to happen to lack legal documentation to be able to apply for and obtain selected practice license. My reasons are:

- Undocumented members of the community are members of the community. They live, work, and participate in society like their documented counterparts.
- Many of the individuals who lack documentation came to the country as children, and denying them the rights that other community members enjoy on the bases of their residency status, which is something they made no decisions about, is cruel. This community and our country is the only place they know as their home.
- Even those who came knowing that they were breaking a law, did so to either save their lives from political oppression or save their families from starvation and disease. As a mother, I cannot blame anyone who will do whatever they can to provide for their children.
- Health care providers must be congruent with the communities that they serve. Few providers are aware of the challenges that undocumented members of the community face and thus are unable to counsel properly and/or implement solutions that are effective in outcome and cost.
- As someone who has played various roles within the health care system since 1991 – volunteer, technician, staff nurse, nurse case manager, nursing instructor, graduate student, and professor of nursing- I have witnessed how resources are wasted and efforts are futile because so many members of the health care system either ignore the needs of the community or fail to understand them. Only through earning the trust and empathizing with the members of this community we can achieve overall community well-being.
- Allowing undocumented members of the community to obtain practice licenses and certifications will ascertain that every provider is practicing within the constraints of their discipline regulating body.
- Last, as a society, we need to stop criminalizing those members of the community who work hard, pay taxes but are not entitled to returns, and are denied the many perks and advantages that other members of their community enjoy.

No one chooses the family or location that they are born into. All we can do is choose to live an honest and decent life. Please do not deny undocumented members of our communities their right to practice in the disciplines that they have diligently prepared to perform.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Carola Salas, MSN, DNP, RN

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