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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0533

“Occupations and Professions - Licenses, Certificates, and Registration - Immigrants”

To: Chair C.T. Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Economic Matters
Committee

From: Sylvetta Meheux

I am a registered medical surgical orthopedic oncology and neuro nurse in Maryland. I came to America at a young age and was undocumented for a number of years. I used to live in a state that made it difficult for undocumented immigrants to go to college, get a job or a license to drive. After years of going to school in America and being able to contribute to society as a tax payer it was really heart breaking to miss out on opportunities to better myself and contribute to society. I can recall wanting to give up a number of times during the time I had no status.

Working in healthcare, especially during the last year the shortage of professionals is nowhere more evident than at the bedside. Nurse to patient ratios have been higher than normal and especially during the recent surge of COVID hospital staff were being stretched to care for more patients than what felt safe to handle. Passing this bill would enable those who have studied for professional licenses to complete the process and become licensed professionals. This would allow more people to enter the work force and alleviate the strain on staffing. As an additional benefit, these professionals would also be able to contribute more tax money to the state to help with other initiatives.

Maryland has made a lot of progress in regards to enabling undocumented students to contribute to society. Passing HB0533 will help previous efforts even more.