

TO: The Honorable CT Wilson, Chair
House Economic Matters

FROM: Elizabeth A. Hafey
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Johns Hopkins supports **HB533 – Occupations and Professions – Licenses, Certificates, and Registration - Immigrants**. This bill prohibits a state occupational or professional licensing board or other governmental agency in the State from denying a license, certification, or registration based on immigration status. In other words, this bill would permit immigrants that are Maryland residents the opportunity to obtain professional or occupational licensure, given they meet all training and state licensure requirements for their occupation. Johns Hopkins is supportive of efforts that expand the healthcare workforce and access of care to its patients.

Johns Hopkins continues to experience workforce challenges. The pandemic has significantly strained and overwhelmed our health care system and our health care providers. Since the start of the pandemic, Johns Hopkins has vaccinated over 29,300 members within the community through mobile vaccinations, and tested over 5,000 residents at community centers tested. Our staff and health care workers have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic every day, while ensuring we continue to provide excellent care to our patients. This legislation, while not a panacea, provides some solutions to help mitigate these shortages. Expanding access to occupational licensure will provide relief to critical professions already facing labor shortages.

Johns Hopkins has always been dedicated to serving and supporting individuals regardless of immigration status. For example, Johns Hopkins runs programs such as The Access Partnership (“TAP”). That program provides access to effective, compassionate, evidence-based primary and specialty care for uninsurable residents of the East Baltimore community surround The Johns Hopkins Hospital (JHH) and Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center (JHBMC) with demonstrated financial need. TAP is the largest and most successful program in the state that provides access to primary and specialty care to the undocumented. JHH routinely receives referrals from other hospitals for undocumented patients that the other hospitals are either unwilling to unable to treat. From a staffing perspective, this program is frequently in need of bilingual clinicians within the community that may be able to be licensed with the passing of this bill.

Government and Community Affairs

Johns Hopkins remains steadfast in its enduring commitment to international students, researchers, and patients. The Johns Hopkins tripartite mission of research, education, and patient care is fueled by an academic community that includes more than 7,000 international students, faculty, and researchers, hailing from more than 120 nations. Immigrants grace every corner of our academic footprint, from our most senior leadership positions to resident halls, labs, classrooms, and hospitals. It is vital immigrants are afforded a fair opportunity to be licensed, as appropriate, to contribute to their communities. This is especially important as there is the workforce shortage and Maryland should look to every resource to fill the need. Thus, Johns Hopkins recommends a **favorable report on HB533 – Occupations and Professions – Licenses, Certificates, and Registration - Immigrants.**