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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: Adeola Oluwatimilehin

My name is Adeola Oluwatimilehin, and I am a registered pharmacist in the state of Maryland. This is my testimony in support of HB0533 and I am asking the committee to submit a favorable report.

I am invested in this bill because of my personal experience as an undocumented immigrant in the state of Maryland. I came to this great country at the age of 13 and moved to Maryland when I was only 15 years old. At the time, I don't believe I completely understood the limitations of being an undocumented immigrant in America. I was a child brought here by parents who also didn't know better but were in pursuit of the great American dream. Upon working hard and graduating high school at the age of 17 in 2005, I quickly found my future dream of becoming a pharmacist being put on hold. This was disappointing for me as a teenager as I didn't understand why I couldn't continue my education. I had done everything right! At the time, there was no “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)” and so I unfortunately had to take the year off to get some under the table jobs and save up some money in hopes of one day continuing my education. I eventually got a chance to enroll in a community college the following year but that came at a steep price, such as paying international student rates in a state that I had been in for years.

My experience makes this bill personal and necessary. Students and working professionals should not be denied the necessary tools they need to be contributing members of society. Like me, being undocumented already had its financial disadvantages. I was being paid \$5 per hour for a position that averaged starting pay of \$9 per hour. As a license and practicing pharmacist now in the state of Maryland, I can't imagine being restricted from being able to obtain the necessary license and/or paperwork necessary for furthering my future and impacting my community the way I do. I want to continue to believe in the American Dream, which promises everyone regardless of background that if you put in the work, you can attain your dreams.

I urge this committee to pass HB0533 without delay. The state of Maryland needs the many brilliant minds currently being limited by documentation. These exceptional talents keep our state strong and healthy.