



HB 454 - Health Occupations - Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations - Immigrants
House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 22nd, 2023
SUPPORT

Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 454. This bill will help immigrant workers to have health occupational licenses, certifications, or registrations.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

Currently, immigrants that complete all requirements for a particular license can be denied based on immigrant status. This limits careers available to immigrant communities. These careers include ones in the healthcare field, which have a salary range between \$30,000 and \$80,000. Expanding access to health occupational licensure will increase the immigrant population access to stable careers, entrepreneurship, and jobs that foster communities.

Stable careers provide individuals a stable income and combats economic instability. This will provide families a greater opportunity to keep stable housing, have access to proper nutrition, and provide for basic necessities.

The pandemic has caused financial crisis across many communities by endangering entire industries. The immigrant community felt this significant impact, and by increasing their access to licensed careers, they can have a greater opportunity to overcome the financial strain caused by COVID-19.

HB 454 will improve the economic stability of immigrant families by:

- Prohibiting a State occupational or professional licensing board or other government agency in the State from denying a health occupational license, certification, or registration to an immigrant if the individual meets certain requirements.

For these reasons, we encourage a favorable report on HB 454.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope