



Indivisible: Central Maryland

Susan Radke, Lead Advocate

Dsusan56@gmail.com

Liz Enagonio, Lead Advocate

lenagonio@icloud.com

TESTIMONY FOR HB0454

Health Occupations - Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations - Immigrants

Bill Sponsors: Delegate Lopez

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Organization Submitting: Indivisible Central Maryland

Person Submitting: Liz Enagonio, Lead Advocate

Position: FAVORABLE

My name is Liz Enagonio, representing both myself and Indivisible Central Maryland, a grassroots organization of constituents dedicated to protecting progressive and democratic values. **Indivisible Central Maryland strongly supports HB0454.**

Please allow me to tell a personal story of a young friend from Guatemala whom I sponsored out of detention in 2020. She was jailed in Arizona after approaching the border seeking asylum. In the fall of 2019, she had been deliberately run down by a truck in her home village after refusing to participate in gang activities. She sustained a traumatic brain injury, and was hospitalized for some six weeks. She was not safe in Guatemala.

I posted bond and agreed to support this young woman. Our volunteer group, Asylum Helpers, was able to obtain a pro bono attorney for her immigration case. Unfortunately, she remains undocumented due to the years-long wait to obtain a hearing for asylum. Meanwhile, we have a capable and motivated young woman who would like to obtain work as a health care provider. Maryland, in many ways immigrant friendly, provides in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants. She could also apply for the Community College Promise Scholarship to attend community college tuition-free. In either case, I am willing and able to pay for her to attend college. Yet, once she graduates, she is unable to obtain a social security number due to her immigration status. For this young woman and the many like her, Maryland should come into conformity with its own ideals of supporting new immigrants, and require licensing agencies to accept an Individual Tax Identification Number to apply for licensure. Granting professional licenses to immigrants such as my young friend would allow employers to fill jobs and enable immigrants such as this woman to contribute their skills to the state's workforce.

For all these reasons, Indivisible Central Maryland strongly **SUPPORTS HB0454.** Thank you.