

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 0136:

Monday, January 23, 2023

Jorge L. Torres Romo
1241 Knoll Mist Ln,
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

TO: Hon. Luke Clippinger, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
RE: In Support of House Bill 0136
FROM: Jorge L. Torres Romo, DACA Student

My name is Jorg L. Torres Romo and I am a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient. I immigrated from San Luis Potosi, Mexico with my family when I was only 4 years old. Growing up, I was aware that I was considered to be “undocumented”, but I did not know exactly what that meant until my parents told me I had to apply for DACA. This was when I realized that I was not like the rest of my peers, and that my future was dictated by a different set of rules than most people. Navigating the college experience was difficult because my situation was different than most, and not all of my questions had straight forward answers. Despite my difficulties, my experience was definitively improved by being a DACA recipient, because having this status opened opportunities I may not have had otherwise. As a student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore Dental School, I am preparing for a career that will benefit the immigrant community I grew up in. It is important that I do everything I can to help my community grow stronger.

I strongly support House Bill 0136 as a means of expanding occupational licensure to our immigrant community, of recouping investment in educational opportunities our state has funded, and of equitably serving our increasingly diverse population.

Bill 0136 will greatly improve my community by providing many more opportunities for employment and experiences. Many immigrants have the capabilities and the desire to work in the health-care field, but do not pursue these dreams due to a lack of a social security number. Broadening access to employment for qualified individuals will benefit the state of Maryland economically and improve public safety, as people seek out certification instead of circumventing it due to the SSN requirements. This bill would also encourage the diversification of the health-care industry in Maryland, as more immigrants will have the opportunity to join it. I personally know how important it is to see people

who look like you and have similar experiences to you in healthcare. It is experiences like this that encouraged me to study dentistry in the first place.

For these reasons, **I strongly urge a favorable report on House Bill 0136.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jorge Torres, DACA Student