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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 0136:
Child Support Enforcement - Occupational and Recreational Licenses - Taxpayer
Identification Number

TO: Hon. Luke Clippinger, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Luz Chavez Gonzales, MD Youth Organizer at United We Dream

DATE: Tuesday, January 24, 2023

My name is Luz Chavez Gonzales and I currently serve the role as the Maryland Youth Organizer. United We Dream is the largest immigrant youth-led community in the country. We create welcoming spaces for young people – regardless of immigration status – to support, engage, and empower them to make their voice heard and win.

Current Maryland law requires all applicants for occupational licensure to provide a Social Security Number; however, this requirement is not aligned with the constitutionally established jurisdiction of licensing authorities, with Maryland’s economic interest, with national trends, and with the state’s investment in the immigrant community. **United We Dream strongly supports 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.**

Maryland is home to a large immigrant community: according to the American Immigration Council, one in seven Maryland residents is an immigrant - or, almost one million individuals comprising 15% of the population. Maryland has made good strides in providing a measure of opportunity to these communities, for example, by expanding in-state tuition and free community college access to all Marylanders, regardless of immigration status.

However, by not allowing all immigrants to obtain an occupational license that they are otherwise qualified for, the State is losing its investment as businesses lose not only competent labor, but on revenue. According to the Higher Ed Immigration Portal, there are 237,845 undocumented immigrants in the state - 15,485 of them who are DACA eligible. The spending power of just the DACA eligible population is over \$285 million, with a tax contribution of \$36 million.

Expanding access to occupational licensing for immigrants would not only be in the State’s best economic interest, it would align with developments in other states that have expanded access, and that have reciprocity agreements for licensure with Maryland. An individual does not need a Social Security Number to apply for licensure in New Jersey, a state with multiple licensure reciprocity agreements with Maryland.

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Occupational licensing boards are not immigration enforcement authorities; their purview is simply to determine if an individual possesses all qualifications to perform and safely serve the public in a particular profession. Maryland should follow the lead of other states that have removed Social Security Number requirements from licensing applications, and thus expand the labor pool in our State, and unlock untapped potential for economic growth. **We strongly urge a favorable report on House Bill 0136.**

Respectfully submitted,

Luz Chavez Gonzales MD Youth Organizer at United We Dream