

February 14th, 2024

Ewaoluwa Obatuase
Silver Spring, MD 20906

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0374

“State Emergency Medical Services Board - Licenses and Certificates - Application Requirements”

To: Honorable Representative Beidle, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Ewaoluwa Obatuase

My name is Ewaoluwa Obatuase, I am a recent graduate of the University of Maryland, College Park School of Public Policy and **I am asking the committee to give a favorable report on SB0374 for the following reasons:**

- This legislation is a step in the right direction to help immigrants in the state who desire to support their communities in times of emergencies. It will have a profound impact on the Maryland healthcare system and benefit our immigrant community, especially our students.
- Passing this legislation is important for four reasons:
 1. In 2023, Maryland passed a health occupational licensure bill (ch0375) that prohibits health occupation boards from requiring applicants to provide proof that they are lawfully present in the United States or have a Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) as a condition for licensure. Therefore, passing SB0374 will be consistent with past bills that have helped immigrants in the state and further codify their protections to obtain professional licenses.
 2. SB0374 will remove the roadblocks to obtaining an EMT license and encourage more students who desire to become paramedics, firefighters, emergency room technicians etc. to complete their education and training so that they do not turn to other fields just because those fields do not require licenses. It would be a loss to Maryland’s workforce and communities if aspiring EMT trainees pursue other fields simply because the state bars them from volunteering and/ working as a licensed emergency medical technician.
 3. It is inconsistent to limit professional licenses from individuals with the qualified training and education if the actual operation of that profession

does not require U.S. citizenship. Removing this licensure barrier will allow thousands of immigrants in Maryland to diversify and contribute to a workforce that is in need.

4. Lastly, with shortages and impacts still lingering from the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, SB0374 will help counties and municipalities fill in EMT vacancies. Just this year Baltimore City Fire Chief Wallace said the city is down 80 EMS providers, and that number has increased ([WBALTV 11 news](#)). Therefore, passing this legislation would bring relief to our cities and towns as more immigrants could obtain the necessary licenses to fill in these vacancies and respond to thousands of medical emergencies that arise each year.

I respectfully urge the committee to give SB0374 a favorable report.

Thank you,
Ewaoluwa Obatuase