

SB0374 Favorable Bill Testimony-Obatuase.pdf

Uploaded by: Ewaoluwa Ogundana

Position: FAV

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

SupportSB374.GWijetunge.pdf

Uploaded by: Gamunu Wijetunge

Position: FAV

Support SB0374

Last year in Wheaton volunteer and career EMTs, paramedics and firefighters responded to over 10,000 calls for service. Our one hundred plus volunteers provided nearly 80,000 hours of service while responding to fires, car crashes, assaults, cardiac arrests, overdoses, births and the occasional cat stuck in a tree. It is dangerous work. We get sick and injured both physically and mentally, and the work places enormous strain on our families. No matter how difficult the burden, the 911 calls keep coming, and we can't let our community down.

Keeping our ambulances and trucks staffed is a matter of life and death. Every volunteer that gets licensed by the Maryland EMS Board fills a critical position in the field.

SB0374 and HB 380 will allow us to immediately increase our staffing by one person and more in the future. Amending Maryland law is an extreme length to go to put just one more EMT on an ambulance in Wheaton, but this reflects the **urgency** of our need. Again, the 911 calls don't stop coming just because red-tape is standing in the way.

I applaud you for working together to remove this barrier. You will help people in Wheaton and throughout Maryland.

Thank you.

Gamunu Wijetunge
Firefighter/Paramedic
Past President, Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad

Esene-SB3074.pdf

Uploaded by: Isaac Esene

Position: FAV

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

From: Isaac Esene, Concerned Citizen

Date: February 14th, 2024

To the Members of the Finance Committee

My name is Isaac Esene, and I write to you today not only as a proud military veteran but also as a former volunteer Emergency Medical Technician EMT with Pikesville Station 19 in Baltimore County. My experiences in the field, combined with my commitment to our community's welfare, compel me to express my resolute support for Senate Bill 0374

This bill represents a significant step forward in both enhancing the efficacy of our emergency medical system and fostering a more inclusive society.

During my tenure as an EMT, I had the privilege of serving a diverse array of individuals across Baltimore County. Time and time again, I witnessed firsthand the profound impact of having emergency responders who reflect the rich tapestry of backgrounds and experiences found in our community. When patients encountered EMTs with whom they shared a common language or cultural background, it invariably led to improved communication, trust, and overall care quality.

recognizes the invaluable contributions immigrants can make to our emergency medical services. By removing barriers to their participation, we are not only expanding our pool of potential EMTs and paramedics but also ensuring our emergency response teams are as diverse and dynamic as the communities they serve. This inclusivity is critical for fostering a sense of belonging among all residents and for enhancing the effectiveness of our emergency health system.

Moreover, this bill allows immigrants to demonstrate their patriotism, gain vital skills, and become integral members of society. It underscores the principle that one's ability to contribute to our community's safety and well-being should not be constrained by immigration status.

In conclusion, I urge you to support SB0374. By doing so, we will take a significant step towards creating an emergency response system that is not only more effective but also

more reflective of the values of diversity and inclusion that define our state and our nation.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Isaac Esene

SB 374- State Emergency Medical Services Board- Le

Uploaded by: Jane Krienke

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 15, 2024

To: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 374 – State Emergency Medical Services Board – Licenses and Certificates – Application Requirements

Dear Chair Beidle:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 374.

MHA's [2022 State of Maryland's Health Care Workforce report](#) outlines a roadmap to ensure Maryland has the health care workforce it needs now and into the future. Removing barriers to licensure is one of the top recommendations.

Last year, the General Assembly passed a bill to ensure every qualified health care professional can apply for a license to practice in Maryland. This legislation makes the state more competitive by removing the social security number (SSN) requirement, which can serve as a significant barrier for internationally educated health care workers. Now applicants for a health occupations license can use alternative identification, including an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN) or alternative documentation as permitted by the federal Social Security Act. The health occupations boards cannot require a SSN or ITIN as a condition of licensure or certification if the applicant does not have one.

This same barrier should be removed for the EMS workforce. Marylanders rely on EMS to provide lifesaving interventions and transportation, often to hospitals. Ensuring that all qualified members of this workforce are eligible for licensure is critical to build a strong health care system.

State emergency medical services are essential to hospital admission and throughput. Without sufficient EMS providers, Marylanders are not able to access necessary treatment. EMS workers are often the first individuals to administer life-saving care to patients and sustain health for these patients while in transit. The General Assembly Hospital Throughput Work Group emphasized the importance of EMS services in overall hospital throughput—noting many patients utilize these services as transportation for admission to hospitals and for discharge to post-acute facilities including nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, EMS providers, like many other health care workers, have experienced workforce shortages. For EMTs and paramedics, turnover ranges from 20% to 30%

annually often requiring ambulatory services to hire new staff every four years.¹ In 2022, the American Ambulance Association (AAA) recorded a 55% and 39% vacancy rate for part-time paramedics and part-time EMTs respectively.² This data comes from more than 100 EMS organizations representing more than 12,000 EMS employees. Given the limited EMS workforce, high turnover rates, and the downstream impact on hospitals, the hospital field supports the removal of unnecessary requirements like SSN and ITIN as conditions of licensure or certification.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 374.

For more information, please contact:
Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs
Jkrienke@mhaonline.org

¹ American Ambulance Association - 4th Annual Study Shows Worsening EMS Turnover:
<https://ambulance.org/2022/10/17/4th-annual-study-shows-worsening-ems-turnover/>

² Id.

HFAM Testimony SB 374.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph DeMattos

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

February 15, 2024

Senate Bill 374: State Emergency Medical Services Board - Licenses and Certificates - Application Requirements
Written Testimony Only

POSITION: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 374.

HFAM represents skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction of the state. HFAM is affiliated with the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), which is the largest association in the United States representing long-term and post-acute care providers.

Senate Bill 374 is for the purpose of prohibiting the State Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Board from requiring an applicant to provide proof that the applicant is lawfully present in the United States or have a Social Security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number as a condition for licensure or certification; and requiring the EMS Board to require applicants for a license or certificate to disclose certain information or provide alternative documentation and record the information in the applicant's file for a certain purpose.

In Maryland and throughout the country, we are facing a shortage of healthcare workers across settings. Workforce recruitment and retention was a challenge before the pandemic and it has only grown more challenging. Tens of thousands of healthcare workers in Maryland have left the field over the last few years. Licensed healthcare professionals are scarce and all healthcare settings are competing for employees from the same labor pool.

We need all the caring hearts and trained hands we can get in healthcare. Together going forward, we must be intentional about creating healthcare jobs and growing careers, with a specific focus on underserved communities. This legislation will help expand our labor pool for much-needed EMS providers.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report from the Committee on Senate Bill 374.

Submitted by:

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.
President and CEO
(410) 290-5132

SB374_Durbin_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Lou Kaufman

Position: FAV



WHEATON VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD • INC.

2400 ARCOLA AVENUE
WHEATON MARYLAND 20902
(301) 949-4044 • OFC (301) 949-9673
BALLROOM INFO (301) 966-0050

January 30, 2024

I am writing today as President of the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad and on behalf of one of our Members, Madely Perez-Cruz.

Madely joined the Squad in 2019 when she was 16 years old. Since then, she has completed high school and has earned an associate degree from Montgomery College. She has completed the University of Maryland's Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and firefighter training at the Montgomery County Public Service Training Academy.

The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), the licensing agency for EMTs, will not issue a license as she is in the United States illegally, does not have a social security number, and has no work permit.

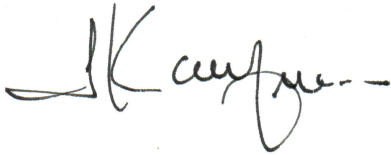
Madely arrived from El Salvador with her family in 2008 when she was 5 years old. She had no idea of her immigration status until MIEMSS denied her EMT license.

She has sought assistance from multiple agencies and attorneys. She is not eligible for DACA as she arrived after June 15, 2007. She has been advised that to become a legal immigrant she should return to El Salvador for a year and then have a legal relative sponsor her return to the United States.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Madely since 2019 as we are on the same duty shift. She is pleasant, helpful, always on time, dressed in uniform, and participates in all activities. Although she is not an EMT, she is able to provide emergency patient care under the supervision of a licensed EMT. She assists in training our new members and has proven to be an excellent clinician.

Please find a path for Madely, who has proven her ability to function and serve as a productive citizen of our community, a means to obtain her Maryland EMT license and continue to serve the citizens of Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L Kaufman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Louis M. Kaufman, EMT, RRT, FAARC
President

The Mission of the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad is to protect the public's health and safety in partnership with the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service. We are a volunteer, not-for-profit corporation that provides emergency services to any person in need. In 2022, the Squad responded to 10,275 incidents and our Volunteers provided 77,691 hours of service.

HB 380_Perez-Cruz_Fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Madely Perez-Cruz

Position: FAV

Testimony IN FAVOR of HB 380 - EMS Bill

Madely Perez-Cruz
Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad, Nationally Registered EMT
725 Beall Ave.
Rockville, Maryland, 20850

mperezcruz@wvrs.org
240-261-8322

My name is Madely Perez-Cruz, and I stand before you today in strong support of Bill HB 380, The EMS Bill. While I may not have been born in this country, the United States has been my home since I was five years old. I am a Nationally Registered EMT who is allowed to serve in other states...but not in Maryland. Current state law bars me from serving our community. HB 380 can help solve this problem and strengthen Emergency Medical Services.

I have been a member of the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad (WVRS) for the past five years. I joined WVRS in my sophomore year of high school to complete the required student service learning hours (SSL). What began as a way to fulfill the required SSL hours quickly evolved into a deep passion for emergency medical services. This passion was sparked by a personal experience – when I was eight, my mother suffered a severe fall. The fall caused a brain bleed, from which she fell into a coma for 12 days. I witnessed the professionalism, kindness, and reassurance of the EMTs that day, and it left a lasting impression on me.

Driven by this memory and a desire to help others, in my sophomore year of high school I pursued EMT training and then actively served as a volunteer EMT for four years. Each call served as an opportunity to gain valuable experience and provide compassionate care to my community. Whether treating minor emergencies or calming the fears of families during a crisis, I approached every patient with the respect and dignity they deserved. I trained extensively,

driven by the knowledge that every call could impact someone's life, just as mine - and my mom's - were impacted.

However, due to my immigration status, I'm currently unable to obtain my Maryland EMT license despite completing all the necessary training and being allowed to serve in other states. This bill, HB 380, proposes a solution: allowing qualified individuals like myself to contribute formally to our state's emergency response system.

This isn't about individual exemptions; it's about expanding the qualified pool of EMS providers in Maryland. We face a growing demand for emergency services, and every trained responder represents a potential life saved. HB 380 doesn't lower standards; it leverages the skills and dedication of individuals who have already chosen to serve their communities. Think of the countless families who rely on timely and effective medical intervention during emergencies. This bill ensures they have access to a broader network of qualified professionals, prepared to respond with compassion and expertise.

I urge you to see this legislation not as a special case, but as an opportunity to strengthen Maryland's emergency response system. By embracing qualified individuals like myself, we can build a more inclusive and effective safety net for all our residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

SB 374 - MoCo_Elrich_FAV (GA 24).pdf

Uploaded by: Marc Elrich

Position: FAV



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

February 15, 2024

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: Senate Bill 374, *State Emergency Medical Services Board – Licenses and Certificates –Application Requirements*
Support

I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 374, *State Emergency Medical Services Board – Licenses and Certificates –Application Requirements*.

Senate Bill 374 would prohibit the State Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Board from requiring an individual applying for a position to provide emergency medical services to provide proof of their legal residency in the United States. Specifically, the bill would disallow the EMS Board from requiring an applicant to disclose their Social Security number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) as a condition for licensure or certification.

In Maryland, it is all too common that new Americans making their home in the United States have attained a high degree of educational and professional achievement but are under-employed and not utilizing their experience in the fields in which they are trained. By removing the residency restriction, and prohibiting the EMS Board from requiring an applicant to provide a SSN or ITIN, Maryland will affirm that the State values the contributions of new Americans to our workforce, and that our residents will benefit from having more linguistically and culturally appropriate EMS providers to perform emergency medical services in our communities.

I would urge that the Committee adopt a favorable report on Senate Bill 374.

cc: Members of the Finance Committee

SB 374_Position Paper_EMS Board Licenses-Certifica

Uploaded by: Theodore Delbridge

Position: FAV



State of Maryland
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems

Wes Moore
Governor

Clay B. Stamp
Chairman, EMS Board

Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH
Executive Director

**SB 374 – State Emergency Medical Services Board –
Licenses and Certificates – Application Requirements**

Bill Summary: SB 374 prohibits the State Emergency Medical Services Board from requiring that an applicant provide proof of lawful presence in the United States or have a Social Security number or individual taxpayer identification number as condition for licensure or certification.

MIEMSS Position: Support

Rationale:

- Federal law generally denies eligibility to an alien who is not a “qualified alien” or “nonimmigrant” for many State or local public benefits – including obtaining a professional or commercial license – unless a state affirmatively acts to make such individuals eligible for licensure / certification. (8 U.S.C. § 1621(a), (d))
- Chapter 376 (HB 454) of the 2023 Session enacted a law which made such individuals eligible for licensure by Maryland’s Health Occupations Boards that license under the Health Occupations Article, (e.g., physicians and nurses) by affirmatively providing for such eligibility (*see* 8 U.S.C. § 1621(d)).
- EMS Clinicians – Paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians, Emergency Medical Responder, and Emergency Medical Dispatchers – are licensed or certified by the State Emergency Medical Services Board under the Education Article (Educ. § 13-516), not under the Health Occupations Article. Therefore, Ch. 376 of the 2023 Session did not apply to those seeking to be licensed or certified by the State EMS Board.
- SB 374 bill affirmatively provides for eligibility of aliens to be licensed or certified by the State EMS Board.
- The Commission to Advance & Strengthen Fire Fighting and Emergency Medical Services in Maryland (Ch. 655/SB 414 of the 2023 Session) noted in their report that “...Maryland’s Fire and Emergency Medical Services are facing crucial skilled labor shortages and major disruptions in hiring...” (p. 6)
- SB 374 will help ensure that all qualified individuals may apply for EMS licensure / certification in Maryland.

MIEMSS Supports SB 374 and Urges a Favorable Report