

Honorable Chair & Members of the Committee,

My name is Julia Yen, and I am a proud resident of Legislative District 20 in Montgomery County. I am writing to express my wholehearted support for HB 728, a bill that addresses critical health disparities faced by the immigrant community in Maryland.

My family immigrated to Maryland 30 years ago from Vietnam, and we have proudly called Maryland our home ever since. Like many of my peers, I have seen first-hand how barriers in healthcare access have impacted my family. As a representative of United We Dream DMV, the nation's largest immigrant youth-led network, I stand with my peers in endorsing HB 728.

I am currently a first-generation student at the University of Maryland and I am working towards a Master in Social Work. In my field, I have had the opportunity to work with many immigrant families who are currently struggling with access to healthcare. Given all the people I have met and experiences I have had, I can wholeheartedly say that healthcare is a human right and by removing the immigrant status as a factor in obtaining health insurance is a great step in expanding access to care to immigrants. the first step in the right direction.

Growing up, access to healthcare was paramount for my family of 8. However, due to their immigration status, finding healthcare options that we qualified for was nearly impossible. As a child, I remember the countless nights my parents spent worrying about finding healthcare options for our family, especially for them. Therefore, it is imperative that the Maryland General Assembly passes this bill. Once implemented, this waiver would open the doors for many, including my family, it would afford families across Maryland the opportunity to access vital healthcare services and receive the immediate care they need. For all of the people I know and love that are currently facing this obstacle, I hope that the committee hears us and helps us to remove this barrier.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to consider the profound impact HB 728 would have on the health and well-being of immigrant communities throughout Maryland. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Julia Yen