



Opposition Statement HB367

Health Occupations Boards – English Proficiency Requirements and Licensure
By Endorsement for Nursing
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Maryland Right to Life

On behalf of our over 200,000 followers, Maryland Right to Life strongly opposes HB367.

Maryland Right to Life opposes the State interfering in the independent operations of the State Boards for healthcare professionals. In this case, the State seeks to remove English proficiency requirements for health care practitioners. Marylanders should be able to trust that their health care needs are in the hands of the professionals with the best possible educational standards that would include the ability to listen and understand the patient and the ability to communicate effectively with the patient. The United States of America is primarily an English speaking country, and patients should expect the ability to communicate in English with health care professionals. Translators are provided for the patients who do not speak English. English competency is necessary to effectively communicate to the patient about their health status and any conditions that exist along with treatments, procedures, and medications. Language barriers could lead to adverse outcomes for the patient. This is yet another way the Maryland General Assembly is lowering standards of care. Ineffective communication impairs informed consent and threatens the lives of all patients in the health care system.

We oppose any bill that lowers the standards of practice for any health care provider or occupation. Scarcity of health care professionals is not a reasonable excuse to lower standards of practice and/or remove English competency. This bill extends the interference of the State in the operations of medical boards to license their members and monitor their delivery of health care services. Standards vary from state to state, and the comparison of competency tests is subjective. Maryland needs to maintain its own competency standards and allow each medical board to set their competency standards. The lives of patients are at stake if there is miscommunication or an omission of information between the health care professional and the patient. Health Occupations Boards need to have the independence to evaluate their healthcare professionals based on science and best medical practices for the client and not based on profits or an ideological agenda.

Maryland Health Occupations Boards need to retain their own English competency evaluations for the health and safety of Maryland lives. When it comes to health care, English competency for the health care professional is a matter of life and death. **Maryland Right to Life asks for an unfavorable report on HB367.**