

Testimony – Annika Diaz-Campbell, MD

- Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee.
- My name is Annika Diaz-Campbell, MD. I am a long COVID patient, MIT and Howard University alumna, wife, and mother. I am a concerned Maryland citizen who was born and raised in Maryland.
- I am here in support of HB0027.

- Over a year ago, I became sick with long COVID and lost my job. I was a resident physician training to become an eye surgeon. I went from rushing about a busy hospital treating patients, to being unable to open a Gatorade bottle or turn the pages for my child while he was reading a story.
- I have tried multiple treatments, pulmonary rehabilitation, physical therapy. I have undergone numerous tests and visits to various doctors since my job loss resulted in changing insurance plans.
- Many local long COVID clinics have closed. I now travel an hour each way to Johns Hopkins' long COVID clinic, where I am trialing for an experimental medication—low dose naltrexone-- because we still don't have approved treatments.
- I had to cancel my physician licensing exam due to severe brain fog that persists to this day. Most days, I cannot stand up right for more than a few minutes at a time, write more than one email, or leave the house. My goals have shrunk from saving patients' vision to simply brushing my teeth and being present for my young child.
- I want to fulfill my dream to serve Maryland patients as a doctor. Now, I am on disability, relying on my church and family, and navigating support systems that I never imagined I would need.
- This is happening to hundreds of thousands of other Marylanders. HB0027 would fund the research that could give us our lives back and prevent others from losing theirs.

- I urge this committee to give HB0027 a favorable report. Thank you for your time and for listening to my story.

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