



*February 3, 2025*

*To: Chairs Bailey and Mathieson and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services*

*From: Victoria Francis, Deputy Director, State & Local Initiatives, American Immigration Council*

***RE: HP 70/ LD 105: An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission Regarding Foreign-trained Physicians Living in Maine to Establish a Sponsorship Program for Internationally Trained Physicians***

Dear Chairs Bailey and Mathieson and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services,

My name is Victoria Francis, and I am the Deputy Director of State and Local Initiatives at the American Immigration Council (the Council), an organization that works to advance positive public attitudes toward immigrants and create a more welcoming America—one that provides a fair process for immigrants and adopts immigration laws and policies that take into account the needs of the U.S. economy.

I am submitting this letter to express the Council's support for removing barriers that keep qualified Mainers from contributing to the state's workforce. To this end, I respectfully encourage the passage of HP 70/LD 105, which would facilitate pathways for qualified international medical graduates to practice in Maine by implementing the recommendations of the Commission that will help address areas across the state experiencing a shortage of physicians.

My organization has worked with leaders in government, business, and civil society across the country to recognize the crucial role immigrants are playing in state and local economies in some of the fastest-growing and most in-demand fields, including healthcare. In order to remain competitive and meet critical healthcare workforce shortages, Maine will need to continue to implement policies that not only attract and retain immigrant talent that complements U.S.-born workers but also build career pathways for immigrants already living in the state. HP 70/LD 105 will do just that by expanding access to licenses to qualified internationally trained residents, thereby increasing economic opportunities for all residents and helping to meet the state's pressing workforce needs.



To help illustrate why this measure is so important and why it makes sense to reduce barriers for all qualified Mainers, my organization has conducted quantitative research on the impact immigrants already have on the state and the demand for workers in Maine.<sup>1</sup> What we found is striking.

- **In 2022, Maine was home to more than 57,500 immigrants, making up 4.5 percent of the state's workforce despite comprising just 4.1 percent of its population.** Immigrants are critical to addressing the state's workforce shortages across the skills and education spectrum, with 68.3 percent of immigrant Mainers being of working age (ages 16-64) compared to 61.6 percent of their U.S.-born counterparts and over one in five immigrants holding a bachelor's degree or higher.
- **As Maine has seen an increase in demand for multilingual and culturally competent employees, immigrants are uniquely positioned to provide support across all industries.** From 2018 to 2022, the number of online job postings that require bilingual skills in Maine increased by 180.0 percent.
- **Despite barriers to entry, immigrants are already helping fill critical workforce shortages.** Between 2015 and 2019, the average share of physicians in Maine who were immigrants was 15.9 percent, and the average share of registered nurses who were immigrants was 4.5 percent.
- **For years, Maine has faced severe physician shortages,** with some counties across the state registering 113 physicians per 100,000 residents. Future projections remain dire. Maine is expected to need an additional 120 primary care physicians by 2030, significantly impacting the accessibility of healthcare.<sup>2</sup>

As more Mainers reach retirement age and the state must address workforce shortages, retaining and leveraging the talent of all residents is critical. Maine is in a position to take decisive action to support and leverage the skills of the state's future workforce and advance opportunities that benefit all Mainers. I encourage the Senate Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services to support the passage of HP 70/LD 105.

Thank you for your consideration,

Victoria Francis  
Deputy Director, State & Local Initiatives  
American Immigration Council

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/maine/>.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/growing-demand-healthcare-workers-maine>.