



03/03/2024

Dear Health and Human Services Senate Committee,

I am writing to express my unequivocal support for the imminent International Medical Graduates (IMG) Bill. As someone who understands the challenges faced by IMGs upon relocating to the US, I feel compelled to emphasize the critical nature of this legislation in addressing the challenges faced by IMGs and ensuring that their valuable contributions to our healthcare system are fully realized.

IMGs, despite their invaluable skills and qualifications, encounter numerous barriers that hinder their ability to contribute fully to the U.S. healthcare system. The challenges faced by IMGs include navigating the complex healthcare system, limited access to residency programs, and the exorbitant costs associated with certification and licensure. These barriers not only impact the professional growth of these individuals but also affect the communities that could benefit from their expertise. A case in point is Dr. Fowzia Haji one of SMAA member, a mother of 5 who moved to Minnesota 30 years ago and could not join residency, she went into other fields to raise her family and now her children who are IMGs themselves are facing similar challenges that their mother faced.

The proposed IMG Bill represents a significant opportunity to rectify these disparities and ensure that IMGs can integrate seamlessly into the healthcare workforce, especially here in Minnesota. By addressing the challenges faced by IMGs, this legislation will not only enhance the diversity and richness of our healthcare professionals but also contribute to improved patient care and outcomes. This legislation not only acknowledges the merit and qualifications of IMGs but also underscores our commitment to fostering a healthcare system that thrives on diversity, inclusivity, and excellence.

Somali Medical Association of America (SMAA) respectfully urge you to strongly support the IMG Bill as this will resonate with the principles of justice, fairness, and equal opportunity. By doing so, you will be championing the cause of skilled and qualified medical professionals who are eager to serve our communities. Moreover, your vote for this bill aligns with the principles of fairness, diversity, and the pursuit of excellence within our healthcare system.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to the betterment of our healthcare system. I trust that your vote for the IMG Bill will stand as a testament to your commitment to a more robust, diverse, and effective healthcare workforce.

Sincerely,

Abdifatah Haji, MD, MPH

Somali Medical Association President