

My name is Ćamil D. Srna, and I serve as the Job developer for the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants in Vermont. USCRI is a non-profit organization that advances the rights and well-being of refugees and immigrants in the United States and around the world. In this capacity, I assist New Americans in obtaining meaningful employment by facilitating enrollment in workforce development programs and supporting them in pursuing the long-term career objectives identified during their initial intake, with many indicating a strong interest in pursuing careers in healthcare and medicine.

Passing this bill will create clear pathways for internationally trained healthcare professionals to join Vermont's workforce and expand culturally responsive care for our communities. It will empower highly skilled New American healthcare professionals to resume their medical careers; improving access to care, supporting community health, and making full use of their invaluable expertise. I urge the Legislature to pass S.142.

Through my work, I have met numerous clients who were physicians, nurses, and other medical professionals in their countries of origin. Their experience spans specialties such as Family Practice, Pediatrics, and Radiology. For example, one client is a Gastroenterologist from Afghanistan who has been unable to find meaningful work since arriving, and another client is a Ukrainian physician who is fluent in four languages and conversational in English, but who can only find employment in manufacturing.

Additionally, two of my colleagues at USCRI are internationally trained medical professionals who currently serve as Case Managers. While they excel in these roles, they possess the skills and expertise that could one day transform lives at institutions such as the University of Vermont Medical Center.

I also serve as a per diem Clinical Patient Safety Attendant at the University of Vermont Medical Center. In this role, I have met and worked alongside many dedicated healthcare professionals who are highly qualified for the positions they currently hold. Unfortunately, many of them have been unable to advance because there is no clear pathway to do so.

Creating more opportunities for career progression, as proposed in this bill, would immediately unlock a pool of skilled candidates ready to fill critical roles. This approach not only supports these workers in reaching their full potential but also strengthens our healthcare system by addressing staffing shortages and improving patient care.

S.142 is a practical, proven solution to Vermont's healthcare workforce shortage. Twenty-two states have enacted similar legislation with great success, including our neighbors in New York and Massachusetts. Here in Vermont, highly trained physicians from other countries are unable to practice. Many are overqualified for their current positions and eager to return to the professions they were educated in and passionate about. Their knowledge and experience represent an untapped resource that could significantly strengthen our healthcare system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Based on my knowledge and experience, I believe that S.142 will improve healthcare for Vermonters and ensure the state remains a welcoming place for new Americans ready to contribute their skills and expertise.