

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Williamson and Wilson, and Members of the Committee

My name is Eddie Ramirez. I am recent graduate of OHSU School of Dentistry where I was the first undocumented individual to be accepted, matriculate and now graduate and licensed in the state. I'm writing testimony in favor of SB 854, which would allow individuals like myself to be professionally licensed in their careers with an ITIN or other federally issue ID numbers in lieu of a social security number.

As a now new dentist, the memories of going through a professional program are still recent. As a DACA student, many professional institutions did not understand what this meant in terms of "residency," (i.e. are they an international student? In State? Out of State). I remember applying to 5 institutions of which 3 rejected me, without evaluation of my application because I had "DACA status." I was fortunate to be accepted to OHSU School of Dentistry for the Summer of 2014. However, as I progressed through my 4 years of dental school, I knew that getting my license may be another obstacle.

I was fortunate to have the support of the Oregon Dental Association as well as previous members of the Oregon Board of Dentistry, who understood what it meant to be DACA. With DACA we are given a social security number, and therefore applying for licensure did not have many complications as the Board Dentistry was aware of what a DACA individual was.

However, there are situations where undocumented students make it to graduation from their individual professional programs, yet can't be licensed because they lack an SSN. It is important to be aware that these students endured 4+ years of education, all while working full time, and reach the end, only to be told that they cannot be licensed.

We must have the ability to broaden our thoughts and view the obstacles from the perspective of the applicant for licensure. For most careers there are various board exams that are not only stressful financially, but emotionally. In my case I had to undergo 3 written examinations (of which one was 2 days) and a clinical examination where a procedure was performed on a live patient. The idea of having passed all this, and then being told I cannot be licensed is heart breaking. By clinical and standardized testing, I would be competent. However, if policy or circumstances were different, legally I would not be eligible to be granted a license.

We live an a period in time, where federal regulations are outdated, and have caused this up and coming generation of DREAMer and undocumented communities that want to succeed and find the means to establish a career. Hindering them from a professional license only for the lack of SSN is not a choice.

For we all are trying to make better lives and be successful, and have done all the correct educational steps to earn the title that we have today.

I appreciate your time, and please feel free to contact me with any questions.

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