



JOHN J. MACCO

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 88TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

To: Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform

From: Representative John Macco

Date: Wednesday, December 13th 2023

In Favor of AB 822

Chairman Sortwell & Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a hearing on AB 822.

Imagine a Wisconsin where there are 580,000 high quality, well vetted individuals that want to work. Imagine our state laws presenting illogical hurdles to these individuals to reach their full potential. Unfortunately, this is our reality.

According to DWD's Job Openings & Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), in August of 2023, Wisconsin had a total of 187,000 job openings across the state. The recurring concern voiced by employers about the challenge of filling these positions resonates widely. While the legislature actively explores inventive approaches to draw in talent and retain workers, there's an overlooked opportunity that Wisconsin should be taking advantage of.

In 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program was created. This program has since been closed therefore it is a closed group of 578,000 individuals across our country. Currently, 5,800 DACA recipients call Wisconsin home. On average, Wisconsin DACA recipients arrived at the age of 7. I ask you, how much control did you have over your life, where you lived, at 7? We have long held, in this country, that we do not hold children responsible for the crimes of their parents.

There is a great misunderstanding when it comes to DACA recipients. DACA recipients are a finite group of people in our communities that fit within very narrow criteria:

- DACA recipients must have been brought to the United States when they were young children and continually resided in the U.S. since 2007, meaning this is not a growing group of people or a loophole instigating illegal immigration.

- These people are now 16-40 years old today- average age is 29 years old.
- They must currently be in school, have graduated high school, have obtained a GED, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the United States Coast Guard or armed forces of the United States.
- AND they cannot have a felony, a significant misdemeanor, or multiple misdemeanor offenses

These individuals have Driver's License, Social Security cards, have to sign up for the U.S. military draft, and have Work Authorization. DACA recipients must also submit to a background check every two years performed by Homeland Security where they must provide numerous items which testimony after me will explain in more detail.

I have decades of experience in running multiple businesses, and I would immediately hire any DACA individual to any of my companies. These are high quality individuals that want to be here, even though our government presents them with numerous hurdles to be successful. Let me be clear, there is no clear path to citizenship for these individuals. If there was, they would be working towards that.

Any claim these individuals are here for a free ride are unsubstantiated.

- They pay taxes, but cannot vote.
- They cannot claim unemployment
- They cannot claim student loan aid
- They cannot claim food stamps
- They cannot claim social security.

Which leads us to the reason for AB 822. Wisconsin is facing a workforce shortage, yet, by our inaction, Wisconsin bars DACA recipients from working in any profession that requires professional licensure.

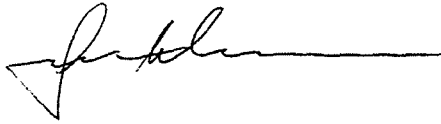
For example, under current law, they are unable to be a Registered Nurse, Plumber, Teacher, Barber, Real Estate Salesperson, Dentist, Cosmetologist, or even a Kickboxing Judge.

We hear calls every day from stakeholders that they cannot find qualified candidates to fill the jobs that they need to function. DACA recipients are here, what is the state of Wisconsin going to do about it? I am not asking you to give them a hand out. Your vote would simply lift a bureaucratic block which stands between our students and the workforce.

AB 822 will open up the opportunity for DACA recipients to obtain Professional Licenses. Currently, we are graduating nurses, teachers, engineers, plumbers, who then cannot actually work in the state of Wisconsin and we are forcing them to move out of state. If we want to fix our shortages, we should allow our employers to access all qualified individuals that reside in our state.

With that being said, I want to make clear to everyone in this room, immigration is a federal issue and **not** what these bills deal with. Illegal immigration needs to be fixed, the border needs to be solved, but that is not what we deal with here in State Government. These are more tools in our toolbox to help our industries find the people they need, and build a better future for Wisconsinites. Let's join the 16 states that have allowed DACA to access professional licensing. We have an opportunity here to innovate our state laws and make progress where Congress refuses.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John J. Macco', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John J. Macco
Representative
88th Assembly District

REPRESENTATIVE
SYLVIA ORTIZ-VELEZ
ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 8

I want to take a moment to thank everyone here for their individual time over these last few months. I'd like to thank, members of the medical field, educational field, Republicans and Democrats alike, who all came together to help unlock some of the doors currently barring individuals and working families from entering the workforce. Finally, I want to thank Representative Macco, my fellow colleagues, this committee for hearing this very important workforce bill.

DACA recipients are working hard to contribute to Wisconsin. 1 in 6 are enrolled in higher education. Many more are employed and some work for the military. Collectively Daca recipients in Wisconsin pay \$45 million in federal and \$31 million in local and state taxes and spend more than 200 million a year. Not only that but also many are having families of their own, with their children being American citizens who need their families support.

This workforce bill looks to unlock some challenges presented to those looking to work in our state. Wisconsin will face a shortage of 45,000 workers by next year. As a state, we cannot afford to sit on the sidelines and make investments in our labor force, only to have someone else utilize the talent we need here.

By allowing, people who are otherwise eligible to work in the United States to also work in professional licensing fields in Wisconsin, we will increase the possibilities of being able to fill our workers shortage. By ensuring our industries and professional licensing can be filled in the future, we can secure the reliable and hard-working labor that is needed to keep Wisconsin moving forward.

I want to share someone's personal story. Someone who grew up in my neighborhood, who went to same schools I did and lived a relatively similar life, only for her to find out as an adult, that she was not born in this country. Wisconsin put her through grade school, middle school and high school. Everything she knew was here. She put herself through college to try and give back to Wisconsin only to feel the pressure of having to leave and moved to Canada because she was not able to work here in Wisconsin in the professional field she studied.

We are losing our labor to other places, and we are losing our investments we have made into people. Once again, Wisconsin cannot afford to sit on the sidelines and make investments only to have someone else utilize the labor we so desperately need by people who are eager and wanting to work in this state. This is the right thing to do for Wisconsin.

Thank you again I look forward to unlocking employment barriers in Wisconsin for the good people looking to join our workforce.

Sincerely,





LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

**Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform
AB 822 Testimony of Senator Lena C. Taylor
12/13/2023**

Chairman Sortwell, Vice Chairman Gustafson, and members of the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Assembly Bill 822, relating to the eligibility to receive occupational credentials for recipients of deferred action under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

Every state in the United States is facing skills gaps among middle-skill occupations. These occupations, which require a higher level of education than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree — currently represent the largest portion of the U.S. labor market. Jobs such as nurses, paralegals, dental hygienists, electricians and many others require specific education leading to an occupational license or certification. The reality is that we are desperately in need of workers and are willfully overlooking a workforce that could help us close this gap.

Wisconsin, like many states permits recipients of deferred action under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, to work legally in the United States. Yet, licensing boards and other license-issuing bodies within many states do not allow DACA beneficiaries to obtain many of the earlier identified credentials.

As of December 31, 2022, there were roughly 580,000 active DACA recipients living in the U.S. It is also estimated that DACA recipients together with other immigrants, account for about 17% of the U.S. workforce. Couple that data, with the fact that more than 1 in 5 occupations require a license, we must look for ways to supplement our occupational workforce. In passing AB 822, Wisconsin would be joining an increasing number of state legislature that have enacted laws reducing barriers for certain immigrants to receive licenses for in-demand jobs.

As an example, in 2016 Nebraska passed a similar law that allowed the state's more than 3,000 DACA beneficiaries to receive certifications in over 170 professions and fill job shortages in various occupations, including carpenters, electricians, machinists and welders. Wisconsin has a similar job market, where middle-skill occupations account for a sizeable portion of our job market. Yet, we don't have enough workers in the state, with the needed training and licenses for these positions.

Today, we can address some of these labor shortages by specifically granting DACA holders the ability to obtain professional licenses for certain occupations. This is a bill that serves the public interest. I ask for your support for AB 882 and thank you for your consideration.



December 13, 2023

TO: Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensure Reform

FROM: Mike Tierney, Legislative Liaison for the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services

RE: Assembly Bill 822 Relating to: eligibility to receive occupational credentials for recipients of deferred action under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

Chairperson Sortwell and Committee members,

Thank you for holding this hearing today on Assembly Bill 822 relating to eligibility to receive occupational credentials for recipients of deferred action under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

We appreciate the efforts of the authors in putting this proposal forward. We have registered in favor due to supporting the broader underlying goal of the bill. That goal being to enable persons who have requisite education, skills, and are otherwise qualified, to be credentialed, enter the workforce, support themselves, and provide services that individuals and communities across our state need.

Under this bill, **every** credential that is issued by the Department, or Affiliated Credentialing Boards, is affected. We are excited by the opportunity to work with community members who would be eligible for licensure under this bill and stand ready to work with legislators to make that happen. Our preliminary review of the bill has already provided us with insight into provisions we would need to successfully implement the legislation and manage these credentials. This includes:

1. A delayed effective date of at least 6 months which would allow for the creation and modification of forms, establishment of written procedures for staff to follow, and modification of software.
2. Emergency and permanent rule-making authority.
3. Clarification that credentials issued under the bill may have an expiration date prior to the dates outlined in statute for a given occupational credential
4. Expenditure and applicant fee authority for conducting the SAVE verification required under the bill. There is a federal fee for this service.
5. Software expenditure authority. We will need to add fields for each occupation credentialed in LicenseE to collect numeric identifiers required by the federal government and allow for uploading of additional forms and verifications.
6. Staffing authority to address the manual processes of setting expiration dates, renewing credentials outside the statutory renewal window, advising individuals regarding renewals, conducting SAVE verifications upon initial licensure, renewal and as needed to verify continued licensure eligibility.

Again, thank you for your consideration of this legislation. We support the effort to allow more people who are qualified to become credentialed in the field of their choosing, our only ask will be that you provide the time, tools and staffing resources we need to do this successfully.



WAUKESHA COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Testimony of Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow Re: AB 822

Thank you, Chairman Sortwell, and members of the Committee on Regulatory Licensing and Reform, for considering my testimony this morning in support of AB 822 regarding eligibility of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients to obtain certain professional licenses. I appreciate the opportunity to provide you my thoughts on this issue.

As County Executive in our state's third largest county, I know all too well about the need for skilled workers in several important sectors of our local economy. Waukesha County has traditionally had unemployment rates below both the state and national averages and continues to struggle to fill jobs that could help keep our economy moving forward. I believe that embracing the talents and skills of DACA recipients is an important step towards addressing the workforce shortage issues we currently face.

DACA recipients, often referred to as Dreamers, are individuals who were brought to the United States as children and have grown up in our communities. Many DACA recipients have pursued education and training in various professions, including nursing, with the goal of serving their communities and filling critical roles in sectors experiencing workforce shortages. They have shown resilience, determination, and a strong commitment to contributing positively to society.

It is in the field of nursing that the issue has come to my attention. I recently participated in a roundtable discussion where the President of Carroll University, located in the City of Waukesha, expressed concerns about nursing students who are DACA recipients that, upon graduation, are unable to become Registered Nurses in the State of Wisconsin, and are instead, forced to look for employment in Illinois. We are losing these students simply because our current law does not permit them to receive the credentials they have trained themselves to obtain.

Allowing DACA recipients to obtain professional licenses is a pragmatic approach to address the challenges posed by the current workforce shortage and will help people with much needed skills and expertise, like the nursing students educated in Waukesha, stay here in Wisconsin, and serve the community that helped train them.

I urge you to support AB 822. Thank you for your time and attention.

Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform
Testimony Provided by Shiva Bidar-Sielaff
Wednesday, December 13, 2023
Re: Support for AB822

Good morning, Chairperson Sortwell and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to express our support for Assembly Bill 822 (AB822). My name is Shiva Bidar-Sielaff and I am the Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer for UW Health. My work in healthcare began more than 25 years ago and during my tenure, I have served in various management positions with patient-facing duties including as a Spanish interpreter. I have also served as the co-chair of the Latino Health Council of Dane County for over 20 years. I am especially proud of the efforts we have made in recent years to ensure all patients, families, faculty, and staff feel respected at UW Health.

The diverse workforce at UW Health is representative of nations and cultures from around the world, as well as close to home. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program is one aspect of that diverse workforce and a very important one. We employ many DACA program participants including within Interpreter Services where they play a critical role in assisting limited English proficient patients. That is why I am appearing before you today to thank the authors of AB822 and applaud their efforts to find common ground on an issue that is important on so many fronts.

The federal DACA program was established in 2012 to assist people in the U.S. who were brought here as children but were not citizens. To be eligible, applicants for DACA had to arrive in the U.S. before age 16 and have originated from a country recognized by the program such as Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, or Honduras. They also had to undergo an extensive background check and reapply to DACA every two years once approved if they wanted to remain in the U.S.

It's important to note DACA program participants pay state and federal taxes, register for the military, are allowed to attain a driver's license, are authorized to work and have a social security card. They make up an important sector of the nation's workforce numbering in the hundreds of thousands and in Wisconsin, that number is nearly 6,000. However, their ability to pursue licensed occupations varies from state to state which is why we are pleased to see AB822 being considered as an avenue to open more employment opportunities to them in Wisconsin. Specifically, AB822 would allow a qualified DACA program grantee the right to pursue an occupational license in nursing, teaching, or real estate among many other licensed occupations. In short, the small act of altering the Wisconsin statutes via AB822 could mean huge changes in the lives of thousands of DACA program participants.

While I am here today to ask for your support for AB822 because first and foremost, it's in keeping with our commitment to treat with dignity and respect our DACA recipients who have grown up right here in Wisconsin, who have graduated from our local high schools, and who deserve access to all the opportunities in this state which is their home. In addition, this bill is also important to our health system and the overall economy of our state because it will help us in growing our workforce. It's no secret that the healthcare workforce shortage has been a major concern for many years but, post-COVID pandemic, it's at a crisis point. Nurses and other health care professions from surgery technicians to ophthalmology assistant are in high-demand and there simply aren't enough of them so we are employing a multitude of innovative strategies at UW Health to address this challenge so we can continue to provide remarkable health care for all the people of Wisconsin. One specific effort is our apprenticeship program for nurses that is among the first in the nation. This program, in partnership with Madison College, is geared toward individuals who would not normally have a smooth glide path to a career in nursing due to lack of opportunities. Our program puts them on the road to becoming Registered Nurses (RNs) after four years, all the while being *paid* to learn.

While I am on the subject of years, it would be wonderful if I came back a year from now and I was able to tell you our first DACA participant was accepted into our nurse apprenticeship program. It would be even better if I came back with that DACA participant in five years, and they talked about their new career in nursing that was made possible by AB822. Please consider the tremendous opportunity before you to make positive change and advance AB822 from this committee at your earliest convenience.

Thank you again for your time and attention. I'd be happy to take questions from committee members at this time.



Jack E. Daniels, III, Ph.D., President

Date: December 13, 2023

Re: Support for AB 822 – Eligibility to receive occupational credentials for DACA program participants

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Regulatory and Licensing Reform

From: Dr. Jack E. Daniels, III, President, Madison College

Background: Madison College educates and trains students for careers in high demand occupations across Southcentral Wisconsin. As the committee is aware, many of those occupations, such as apprentices, building trades occupations, health care, and law enforcement, require licensure or certification for our graduates to be hired into those jobs.

Support for AB 822: DACA participants are our students. As graduates, DACA participants may seek to achieve licensure and employment in states such as Illinois, which grants licenses and certifications to DACA participants. Passage of AB 822 would permit DACA graduates to obtain occupational licensure to work in Wisconsin, providing critical services to members of our communities, supporting the growth of our state's economy.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation to minimize barriers to the licensure and workforce participation of Madison College DACA graduates.



December 13, 2023

Representative Shae A. Sortwell, Chair
Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform
State Capitol, Room 214 North
Madison, Wisconsin

RE: Wisconsin Nurses Association Support of AB 822, *"eligibility to receive occupational credentials for recipients of deferred action under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program."*

Dear Chairperson Sortwell and members of the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform,

My name is Gina Dennik-Champion, I am a registered nurse and Executive Director of the Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA). Thank you for holding this public hearing on AB 822, which allows recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) eligibility to receive occupational credentials, and in this case a registered or licensed practical nurse license. The members of WNA want to extend sincere appreciation to Representative John Macco, for his sponsorship of this important legislation and to those committee members who have signed on as co-sponsors.

WNA supports the opportunity for nursing students who are DACA recipients to be allowed to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Passing this national exam allows for states to issue the RN or LPN license.

In June 2020 the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision regarding DACA policy. Their decision opened the door for states to enact a variety of legislation allowing DACA recipients access to certain benefits. WNA celebrates AB 822 as it will allow nursing students who are DACA recipients and have graduated from a nursing program to receive either a RN or LPN license. Currently, there are two barriers that exist for these students, first, they cannot sit for the (NCLEX) in Wisconsin because of current policy, and secondly, results in not receiving a license. There are 10 states including our neighbors Minnesota and Illinois where these nursing students obtain a nursing license. Unfortunately, returning to Wisconsin is not an immediate option.

DACA recipients are an untapped potential for joining Wisconsin's nursing workforce. We have all seen the data. Pre-COVID forecasting about the nursing workforce reported by the Department of Workforce Development notes that by 2025 there will be an approximate 10 percent loss of Wisconsin's nursing workforce and by 2030 an 18 percent loss. Newer forecasting models are in development which will more than likely show a greater demand for nurses as they will be exiting due to retirement or dissatisfaction with the demands of their employer. The need for nurses will

Wisconsin Nurses Association
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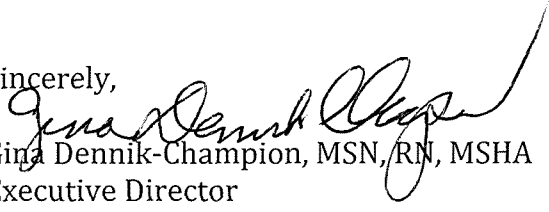
continue as the number of Wisconsin's older adult population will require more health care services that include RN care and coordination.

This scenario is concerning and requires a multitude of strategies for increasing the supply of nurses. WNA applauds the strategy of allowing DACA recipients to obtain a nursing license as described in AB 822.

Wisconsin's nursing education programs that are aware of their DACA students who are enrolled in their program are excellent students. Upon licensure these nurses will remain in Wisconsin to practice, live in our communities, financially contribute to the economy, and support improving the work environment for nurses. Along with their competencies, they will contribute to the bilingual and diversity needs of our patients which are health care organizations are desperately needing.

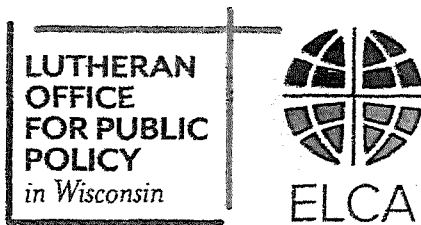
I thank you chairperson, Sortwell and members of the committee for listening to my testimony. I ask that AB 822 be passed out of the committee as soon as possible. I will gladly answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Gina Dennik-Champion, MSN, RN, MSHA
Executive Director
Wisconsin Nurses Association

Wisconsin Nurses Association
6200 Gisholt Drive, Suite 104
Madison, WI 53713
info@wisconsinnurses.org



December 13, 2023

Regarding AB 822

Representative Sortwell, Representative Gustafson and other esteemed members of the Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform thank you for the opportunity to speak about this important bill.

I am here speaking on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), which supports the well-being and fair treatment of our immigrant neighbors. ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton wrote, "Jesus taught us that when we welcome the stranger as a person made in God's image, we also welcome God. Our lives, ministries and congregations have been blessed by many immigrants and refugees over the years — from many of our ancestors to those we welcome among us today. Our faithful witness as the ELCA is enriched by people who are recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)."

Nationally, the DACA program has been in place since 2012. Recipients are required to renew that status every two years, to complete high school or serve in the military, maintain a clean criminal record, and receive regular background checks. On a state level, this is an opportune time to join 16 other states that offer eligibility for DACA recipients for at least one type of professional license; the majority of those states allow for most or all types of professional licenses.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Job Openings & Labor Turnover Survey, there were a total of 187,000 job openings across the state and widely expressed concerns by employers about the challenge of filling these positions. This legislation would help Wisconsin fill our labor shortages.

Most importantly, expanding opportunities for young people to thrive and find more dignity in their work is the right thing to do.

Please support AB 822. And God's blessings on your work.

Pastor Cindy Crane

Pastor Cindy Crane
Director of the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin

Testimony of Pamela Rubalcava on December 13, 2023

In support of Assembly Bill 822

“Good morning. My name is Pamela Rubalcava. I am a DACA recipient. It sounds odd saying that. Imagine living almost your whole life somewhere, loving a country, considering it your home, but being told you are different, and you can't do what others do.

My parents brought me to the U.S. right after I turned 7 years old. From a young age I recall feeling different from everyone else, feeling shame and fear. I dreaded the “where are you from” questions from people I would meet. Out of fear of judgment or to be honest, fear of being on the receiving end of hateful remarks, I would say “here” and end that conversation.

However, today I am not fearful, nor do I feel shame. I am proud. I am proud of the hard work I have put into becoming who I am. I am proud of what I have achieved despite the obstacles placed before me. I am proud to be able to sit before this distinguished committee and not only say “I hold a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration,” but that “I am currently a Master of Science in Nursing Student at Carroll University.” As you can imagine the class schedule and the material has been extremely challenging. To make it even harder, as I am sure you are aware, DACA recipients are not eligible for state or federal financial aid. Because of that, it has been a financial struggle for me and my family.

This spring I will graduate with my nursing degree. However, unless you and your colleagues choose to act, I will not be eligible to obtain my professional nursing license in the state of Wisconsin. I will be forced to move to Illinois or another state that will allow me to have a professional license so I can be a nurse and help people. However, I wanted to become a nurse to help people here. If you pass this bill, you will not only allow me to work here, but it will remove the same barrier impacting all other DACA recipients in the state who are just like me.

I have called Wisconsin my home for the past 18 years. I have built a community of support and trust among family, friends, peers, and patients here. I am not asking for you to give me anything. I have worked hard to earn and acquire the knowledge and skills I have. Isn't that what the American Dream is supposed to be about? I am asking for you to remove these government barriers that serve no purpose and only weaken our state. Pass this bill so that I and others can fully participate in Wisconsin's workforce, help the people of Wisconsin, and help grow our economy.

Thank you for allowing me to speak before you today. It has been an honor and privilege to share my story with all of you, and to advocate for myself and others like me.

God bless”.



Wisconsin State AFL-CIO

6333 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI 53213

Phone: 414-771-0700

wisafclcio.org

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform
From: Stephanie Bloomingdale, President
Date: December 12, 2023
RE: AB 822

For years, hardworking Dreamers have fought for the simple right to live and work without fear, after having arrived in our country as young children many years ago. When Congress passed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program over ten years ago, it helped support a stable workforce, raise wages, and reduce exploitation in our country. However, Dreamers' full potential and contributions under DACA have been limited by a federal law that prohibits them from moving through apprenticeship programs to becoming licensed professionals in states like Wisconsin.

Assembly Bill 822 would provide the authorizing legislation to ensure that Wisconsin residents who have been granted DACA status by the Department of Homeland Security can fully participate in and contribute to our workforce by allowing our State to grant occupational credentials to DACA participants who meet our current licensing criteria. The Wisconsin State AFL-CIO urges support for this important bill.



TO: Representative Shae Sortwell, Chairman
and Members of the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform

FROM: International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) State Conference

DATE: December 13, 2023

RE: Please Support Assembly Bill 822

On behalf of the IBEW State Conference, representing approximately 16,500 licensed electricians from across Wisconsin, we urge you to support Assembly Bill 822.

The IBEW works tirelessly at teaching and training the next generation of licensed electricians in Wisconsin. Like many Trades, our workforce population is aging and we are striving constantly to encourage new entrants into our critical profession.

While we are thrilled that apprenticeship participation in Wisconsin is at an all-time high, we believe there is still work to do. Prohibiting qualified individuals from meeting those requirements and participating in the workforce just because of their DACA status, particularly as a skilled, trained, and licensed electrician, is counterproductive. AB 822 remedies this injustice and eliminates an unnecessary roadblock for people who are often denied work and opportunity through no fault of their own.

As licensed electricians, our training requirements and our exam requirement for journeyworker licensure are of paramount importance to public safety and a productive workforce. This bill ensures that those standards are upheld while granting opportunity for hard working people to gain access to our Trade.

This legislation will pave the way for many hard-working people who play by the rules to have the same opportunity for family supporting livelihoods in Wisconsin as everyone else.

Thank you for your consideration and please support AB 822.



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Representative Shae Sortwell, Chair
Members, Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform

FROM: Tia Izzia, Associate Director for Human Life & Social Concerns

DATE: December 13, 2023

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 822 Occupational Credentials for DACA Recipients

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops of Wisconsin, urges you to support Assembly Bill 822, allowing recipients of deferred action under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to obtain occupational licenses in Wisconsin.

AB-822 extends vital work opportunities to individuals who are DACA recipients. DACA recipients entered the United States as children and know America as their only home. DACA recipients are our family members and neighbors. They are some of the most thoroughly vetted individuals in the state, yet due to their DACA status are denied opportunities to enter into licensed careers that will benefit them and our state. This bill is a common-sense solution to solve such issues.

As a Church, we believe in protecting the dignity of every human being, as we are each created in God's image. The Catholic Church has long advocated for the legal protection, full inclusion, and wellbeing of children brought to the United States. Indeed, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops helped to formulate the first versions of the DREAM Act in 2000 and 2001.¹

The Catholic Bishops have long supported these immigrant youth and their families who are contributors to our economy, academic standouts in our universities, and leaders in our parishes. These youth have grown up in our country, some even choosing to put their lives on the line to serve in our armed forces. They truly exemplify the extraordinary contributions that immigrants can provide to our nation. It is both our moral duty and, in our nation's best interest to protect these youth and allow them to reach their God-given potential.²

We commend the authors for bringing this bill forward not just because of its benefits to DACA recipients and our state, but also because this bill demonstrates what can be accomplished through thoughtful bipartisan collaboration. We thank you for hearing this bill today and respectfully urge you to support it.

¹ Most Rev. Mario Eduardo Dorsonville-Rodríguez, USCCB Committee on Migration, *Written Testimony for a Hearing of the House Committee on the Judiciary*, 2019, justiceformigrants.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Dream_TPS-Testimony-Updated-3.4.19-FINAL.pdf.

² Most Rev. Joe S. Vásquez, Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration, *USCCB Letter of Support for the DREAM Act of 2019*, 2019, justiceformigrants.org/statements/usccb-letter-of-support-for-the-dream-act-of-2019.



Forward Latino is a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy and service organization dedicated to assisting Latinos pursuing the American Dream.

December 12, 2023

Dear Members of the Wisconsin Committee on Regulatory License Reform:

On behalf of our Wisconsin Members, I write today in strong support of Assembly Bill 822. It would allow recipients of deferred action to receive a professional license in Wisconsin, allowing them to put their expertise and talents to work here right here in the state. Currently those graduating with degrees in nursing and teaching as well as many seeking a career in the trades are forced to move out of state to receive a license and work in their chosen field. Given the current workforce shortage, this is not good for our state.

Recipients of deferred action had nothing to do with their circumstance and but for a piece of paper, represent everything we should expect of our nation's citizenry. The U.S. Census Bureau through the American Community Survey found that 89.5% of all DACA recipients are working or are in school. They pay over \$9.5 billion per year in state and federal taxes, even though they are not eligible for most state and federal benefits. They also have passed and must pass every two years a complete background check, commit no felonies or major misdemeanors and much more to retain their status.

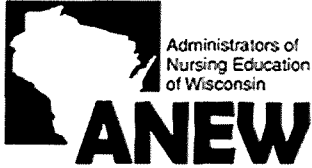
Passing Assembly Bill 822 is not just the right thing to do for these individuals, it is the right thing to do for Wisconsin business.

Once again please register Forward Latino is strong support of the passage of Assembly Bill 822. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (414)389-7131 or efigueroa@forwardlatino.org.

Thank you,

Ms. Eileen Figueroa
National Treasurer

- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Florida
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin



December 13, 2023

TO: Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 822, relating to eligibility to receive occupational credentials for recipients of deferred action under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

The Administrators for Nursing Education of Wisconsin (ANEW) supports, advocates for, and affirms legislation supportive of growing our nursing workforce during this period of critical shortage. As leaders of both public and private Schools and Colleges of Nursing, we support action outlined in Assembly Bill 822, *Unlocking Employment Package* that will remove barriers to licensure for Registered and Practical Nursing DACA students in Wisconsin.

The stories of our DACA students are powerful. Many of them have lived in the United States their entire lives. They have successfully completed their K-12 education in our high schools. And many of them have never set foot in their country of origin. Those who find themselves drawn to nursing are confronted with a lack of educational financial support and uncertainty about their ability to be approved by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) as a foundation to licensure. We see these students being welcomed into Illinois and Minnesota to license after completing our rigorous nursing programs and we lose them from our Wisconsin workforce.

The nursing shortage is worsening at a time when demand for healthcare is increasing. In the next 15 years, **the nursing shortage is projected to increase to a need for 20,000 nurses in Wisconsin.** This requires **the support of all public, private, and technical college nursing programs in Wisconsin to meet the health care needs of our citizens.** Approximately 33% of nurses are 55 years and older, and 38% of nurses plan to leave direct patient care positions within the next decade. We must act now in any way possible to sustainably increase the number of nurses entering practice.

Again, thank you for advancing this important legislation that will minimize barriers to seamless licensure and transition to practice for our well-educated Wisconsin DACA students.

Sincerely,

Chaudette Miller

Chaudette Miller, RN, MSN
ANEW President
Associate Dean, Nursing & Allied Health
Western Technical College



TO: Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform, Wisconsin State Assembly
FROM: Building Advantage, Chris Mambu Rasch – Executive Director
DATE: December 13, 2023
RE: Support for DACA Credentialing Bill – AB 822

Dear Chairman Sortwell and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Building Advantage, I write to share our enthusiastic support for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Credentialing Bill – AB 822. Thank you for holding this hearing, and thank you to the bill's bipartisan authors and sponsors.

Building Advantage is a joint management and labor council representing building contractors and building trades members in Southeastern Wisconsin. We represent and work for hundreds of employer building contractors and thousands of building trades members, on issues of mutual concern and interest for both management and labor. That includes both workforce and safety issues among others.

Building Advantage thanks, the authors, and sponsors of the DACA Credentialing Bill, as this is an important issue. The bill will for the first time open up to DACA individuals the building trades careers that require licensure. Currently, DACA individuals are precluded from becoming plumbers and electricians, for example, as those careers within the trades require licensure in the State of Wisconsin.

This comes at a critically important time as the labor market is tight and construction is setting record numbers of apprentices just to keep up with all the work and retirements impacting the industry. Given the population demographics Wisconsin needs all the workers it can find. This bill will help relieve some of that pressure and give individuals, who through no fault of their own are here in this state, an opportunity to get into highly skilled and paid jobs in the construction industry.

Licensure is a critical component in the State of Wisconsin and Building Advantage appreciates that AB 822 does not change licensure requirements. Licensure requirements help ensure that credentialed individuals are properly trained around issues of competence and safety. As an industry, each year management and labor spend a considerable amount of money helping train the next generation of construction industry workers. Those investments help ensure that the buildings that we live, work, and play in are safe for you, us, and our families.

Thank you for all you do and our sincere appreciation for considering our support for the DACA Credentialing Bill – AB 822.

Best,

Chris Mambu Rasch

Executive Director

Building Advantage

crasch@buildingadvantage.org



-Mobile Computing & ADC
-Wired/Wireless Networking
-Bar Code Printing & Scanning
-IP Video, Audio & Access Control

December 12, 2023

The Honorable Shae A. Sortwell
Representative, Assembly District 2
State of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chairman Sortwell:

I wish to thank you and the other distinguished members of the Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform for your service to the great state of Wisconsin.

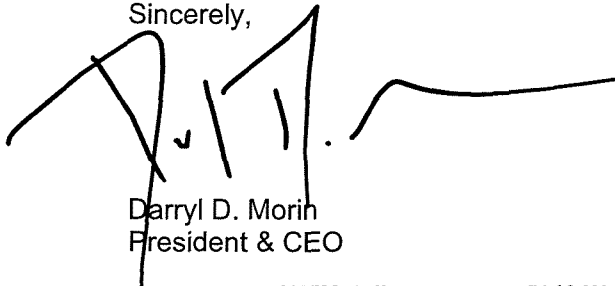
I write today to register my strong support for the passage of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 822. This bill will allow occupational licenses to be issued to recipients of deferred action. As Wisconsin businesses continue to struggle to find sufficient labor to maintain, much less grow operations in Wisconsin, it should be the priority of the state to develop, employ and retain Wisconsin talent right here in Wisconsin. To date this is not happening as recipients of deferred action who are otherwise qualified are unable to receive an occupational license and as such, are moving to neighboring states such as Illinois and Indiana where they can receive a professional license and work in their field of expertise.

While I am not asking the state to take a position on immigration policy which is the purview of the federal government, I am asking the state to remove a needless state government barrier that is preventing individuals who are lawfully allowed to work and drive in Wisconsin from fully participating in Wisconsin's workforce.

I will also add that I have had a conversation with a major Wisconsin employer who is seeking expertise on Employment-Based Immigrant Visas due to the seriousness of the issue. In their words "the lack of both skilled and unskilled labor is forcing us to rethink our growth plans here in the state."

Once again, I wish to register my strong support for Assembly Bill 822. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call me at (888)238-9473 x103 or email me at dmorin@awimobility.com.

Sincerely,

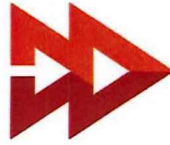


Darryl D. Morin
President & CEO

www.AWIMobility.com

5012 W. Ashland Way, Franklin, WI 53132

888-ADV-WIREless



GREATER MADISON
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Testimony from Zach Brandon to the Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform
December 13, 2023

Re: Support AB 822 – Eligibility to receive occupational credentials for recipients of DACA program

Thank you, Chairman Sortwell and members of the committee. My name is Zach Brandon, and I am President of the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. I am here today on behalf of our board of directors in support of AB 822, which would increase access for professional licenses to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. This proposal provides an opportunity to address our workforce shortage, grow our state's economy and support the contributions and career aspirations of thousands of individuals here in Wisconsin.

The Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce represents more than 1,200 member businesses throughout the Greater Madison region – from new and emerging businesses in cutting-edge industries to small businesses and large enterprise. While diverse in size and industries, collectively, we are working to accelerate our region's economy and improve Wisconsin's global economic positioning.

On that front, there are many good stories to share. Our region boasts steady job growth in advanced, competitive industries, has high workforce participation and robust population growth, led by Gen Z (18–26-year-olds) net migration and new hires. In fact, our region is a top 10 metro in the country for net Gen Z migration, with projections putting us on the cusp of the top five in the next two years. Young people are flocking to our region, which offers tremendous opportunities for our entire state.

With these tailwinds come challenges. Despite our positive in-migration, we continue to have among the lowest unemployment rates in the country. That's great if you are looking for work, but problematic if you are a growing employer in need of workers. The demand for skilled workers currently exceeds the supply. Simply put, we are facing a talent imperative in our region and in our state. We must do more – now – to make our great state a place of belonging to attract, develop and ultimately retain talent.

DACA recipients are part of that opportunity – and a population that we should all want to keep here in Wisconsin. According to the American Immigration Council, the nearly 6,000 DACA recipients in Wisconsin pay more than an estimated \$20 million in state and local taxes. They are us. They are our friends, our family, our neighbors and our employees. We shop with them, we worship with them, and we work with them. They live here, they are invested here, and we should reduce barriers for them to further their academic and career aspirations here.

The bipartisan collaboration on this legislative package is important and commendable. I hope the committee will join us by giving its full support.

Thank you.



The pandemic has pushed teachers out of the workforce in droves, and many schools don't have a safety net to fill the gaps as kids come back into classrooms.

Wisconsin's teacher turnover rates — which include the number of teachers moving to different school districts and leaving the state's public school classrooms altogether — surged in the 2022-23 school year, according to a new Wisconsin Policy Forum report.

The rates of turnover were higher among teachers of color and in school districts serving vulnerable student populations. Turnover among teachers of color is of particular concern due to the documented benefits for all students and especially for students of color from the presence of these educators, including gains in academic achievement.

The pandemic also exacerbated the ongoing shortage of health workers, leaving many health care facilities short-staffed. More will need to be done to recruit professionals into these fields that faced dire shortages

The Wisconsin Policy Forum Report highlights that the Department of Education's can "grow Wisconsin's" teacher programs; this becomes a way for districts to retain workforce.

Allowing immigrants to earn appropriate licensure could also help address worsening labor shortages challenging critical fields like teaching and nursing, fields in which a third of DACA recipients want to work.

The Wisconsin legislature and Senate can easily expand access to thousands of jobs for millions of trained workers, simply by revising outdated laws that forbid many immigrants with work authorization from holding professional licenses. These outdated laws prevent talented, hardworking individuals from contributing their

skills to our economy and our communities, particularly in essential industries that require special licensure

Barring immigrants with valid work authorizations from certain jobs sacrifices the investments our State has made in their education and development and wastes the potential skills they could contribute. Because they are working with an employment authorization document, they are subject to the same wage and labor laws as any other workers. In fact, their employers wouldn't even know they are immigrants until after they're hired. Meanwhile, Meanwhile, DACA recipients are already contributing roughly 11.7 billion a year to the economy—including federal, state, and local taxes. That number could be significantly increased if they were able to access full employment.

Higher reported earnings are important not just for recipients and their families but also for the broader economy. As DACA recipients earn more, they pay more in taxes and are able to spend more, contributing to local, state, and federal economic growth.

DACA recipients are an exceptional part of the immigration issue in our country; they were brought here by their parents as children and in essence had no choice but are blessed to live in the USA. As I say, if I put my 7 year old daughter in the car and drive to the next county or State, she has to come along. She has no choice.

They live in your neighborhood, go to your schools, and work in our community. They have been amongst all of us for years, and besides perhaps their “great looking” Hispanic looks.... They are just as American as any of us around them; you probably never even knew they had this particular status.

This is not an immigration bill and the benefits for our State, not only in the economic side but in showing the great quality of welcoming community we have, can in the long run provide an opportunity for DACA recipients to further show their worth and love to their State and Country. It's time to join this bipartisan effort and do the right thing beyond partisan narratives and divisions.

From: Nancy Hernandez <nhernandez@mmac.org>
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 11:59 AM
To: Rasmussen, Reanna <Reanna.Rasmussen@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Subject: Support of Assembly Bill 822

December 12, 2023

The Honorable Shae A. Sortwell
Representative, Assembly District 2
State of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chairman Sortwell:

I write today to register the Hispanic Collaborative's strong support for the passage of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 822. This bill will allow occupational licenses to be issued to recipients of deferred action. As Wisconsin businesses continue to struggle to find sufficient labor to maintain, much less grow operations in Wisconsin, it should be the priority of the state to develop, employ and retain Wisconsin talent right here in Wisconsin. To date this is not happening as recipients of deferred action who are otherwise qualified are unable to receive an occupational license and as such, are moving to neighboring states such as Illinois and Indiana where they can receive a professional license and work in their field of expertise.

While I am not asking the state should not take a position on immigration policy, I am asking the state to remove a needless state government barrier that is preventing individuals who are lawfully allowed to work and drive in Wisconsin from fully participating in Wisconsin's workforce. This is vital to our work at the Hispanic Collaborative aimed at economically strengthening our Latino population in the who in turn supports state growth as the fastest-growing segment of our population.

Once again, I wish to register my strong support for Assembly Bill 822. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call me at (414) 803-8849 or email me at nhernandez@mmac.org.

Sincerely,
Nancy Hernandez

President

P: 414-287-4118

E: nhernandez@mmac.org

hispanic collaborative