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WASHINGTON'S 9TH DISTRICT

Professional's Access to Health Workforce Integration Act Rep. Adam Smith (WA-09)

Background: The U.S. health care workforce is in crisis. According to the American Hospital Association, the United States will face a shortage of up to 124,000 physicians by 2033 and will need to hire at least 200,000 nurses per year to meet increased demand and to replace the retiring workforce. In addition to the workforce development programs already in place, we need to think about how we can upskill, train, and license a workforce now.

At present, immigrants comprise 17% of the total workforce, yet the Migration Policy Institute estimates between 20-25% of the college-educated immigrant population in the U.S. are severely underemployed. Further analysis shows that 15% of internationally trained health and medical graduates are underemployed compared to 9% of those trained in the U.S.¹ However, these highly skilled immigrants face numerous barriers from language to financial to get fully certified to work in the U.S. health care system and then get hired by local employers.

The Professional's Access to Health Workforce Integration Act would award grants to organizations to support internationally trained health care workers living in the United States and educate employers on the benefits of hiring internationally trained health care workers.

The same Migration Policy Institute study found that there was an estimated \$40 billion lost annually from forgone wages of underemployed college-educated immigrants in the country and that federal, state, and local governments were losing \$10 billion in taxes as a result of those lost earnings. The underemployment of immigrants helps no one and harms everyone. We can start to reverse trends of workforce shortages now by assisting these individuals to get jobs that utilize their skills and training.

Endorsing Organizations: Afghan Cultural Society, Arkansas United, California Immigrants Resources Center, Chemeketa Community College, Chemeketa Community College, Cicero Institute, Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS), Global Cleveland, IMPRINT Coalition, International Community Health Services, International Institute of Buffalo, Jewish Family Service of San Diego, La Casa de Amistad, Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains, Médicos Unidos Venezuela-USA chapter, Nashi Immigrants Health Board, National Immigration Forum, National Skills Coalition, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, One Refugee, OneAmerica, Pars Equality Center, Los Angeles, Portland Refugee Support Group, Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, Restore Education, RUSA LGBTQ, Sea Mar Community Health Center, Seattle Indian Health Board, Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning, Synergy Texas, Talent Beyond Boundaries, The Refugee Advocacy Lab, The Welcoming Center, Tiyya Foundation, Upwardly Global, US Together Inc., WA Allied Health Center of Excellence, Welcome Back Initiative, Welcoming City, and World Education Services.

¹ Jeanne Batalova and Michael Fix, [Leaving Money on the Table: The Persistence of Brain Waste among College-Educated Immigrants](#), Migration Policy Institute (June 2021)