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Maryland Senate Finance Committee
Senate Office Building, 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 742 – Fair Recruitment and Transparency Act – SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of the University of Maryland Carey Immigration Clinic, I am writing to express support for SB 742, legislation to protect internationally recruited workers in Maryland from labor exploitation and trafficking.

The Immigration Clinic represents individuals in immigration related proceedings in Maryland and advocates for protection and full legal representation for immigrants in our state.

Over 5,000 workers come to work in Maryland with H-2 temporary work visas year after year. These workers are an integral part of our communities and our economy. They pick our vegetables, maintain beautiful lawns, and sustain the crab industry in the Eastern Shore. Recruiters discriminate in hiring, mislead workers as to the terms of employment, and charge workers recruitment fees that leave them indebted on the job. These debts serve as a barrier to reporting abuses, and as a result, Maryland is less safe.

When recruited workers suffer abuses, the State of Maryland suffers. By eliminating recruitment fees for work in Maryland, ensuring workers receive a contract at the time of recruitment, and banning discrimination and retaliation, this legislation would combat debt bondage, human trafficking, and other forms of labor exploitation in Maryland.

Through a public registry of recruiters, the bill would root out bad actors and level the playing field for employers who want to do right by their workers. By requiring recruiters to provide workers with an employment contract, this bill would ensure that workers coming to Maryland are fully informed of the terms of their employment before they decide to take a job.

The UM Carey Immigration Clinic strongly encourages you to pass SB 742. Thank you for making Maryland a place where internationally recruited workers are respected and workplaces work for all workers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen A. Sweeney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Maureen A. Sweeney
Law School Professor
Director, Immigration Clinic