



DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION

August 13, 2024

Dr. Alan L. Felsenfeld, Chair
Tracy Montez, Executive Director
DENTAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
2005 Evergreen St. Suite 1550
Sacramento, CA 95815

Re: Discussion/Reconsideration of Foreign Dental Schools Program

Dear Chair Felsenfeld and Members of the Dental Board of California:

I am writing to request that the Dental Board include a presentation at your next board meeting on the foreign dental school program that was effectively eliminated in 2019 during their last sunset review.

My foundation has been working on legislation to bring back the foreign dental school program because it proved to greatly assist our mission and advance our goal of improving the lives of our communities by providing them with quality dental care. The Dolores Huerta Foundation is a 501(c)(3) community benefit organization that recruits, trains, organizes, and empowers grassroots leaders in low-income communities to attain social justice through systemic and structural transformation. Through this program, we have built a powerful network of over 20,000 supporters, volunteers, and voters in the rural agricultural communities of Kern County, Tulare County and Fresno County. The residents of these communities are primarily working class, low-income, Latino immigrants.

Foreign dental schools approved under AB 1116 underwent rigorous and meticulous review by the Dental Board. The fact remains that this program was effectively eliminated due to inaccurate information about the CODA process, specifically the amount of time it takes to be evaluated and approved by CODA. More pointedly, the program was eliminated without any discussion as to:

1. Number of graduates from the Board approved foreign dental schools.
2. Location data of where the dentists who graduated from these schools are practicing.
3. Information on CODA's process to accredit international dental schools.

To prove that the foreign dental school program was a success, we assumed the task of gathering this information. Our research revealed that the two Dental Board approved schools, De La Salle and Moldova University, had graduated almost 800 dentists, of which many are practicing in an area with need.

Since we remain committed to bringing dental care to our communities, I personally attended your meeting on May 15th to request that the Board introduce language in SB 1453 (the Sunset Review legislation) that would reinstate the program with direction on doing a formal study on the program's success. The Dental Board did not approve the request, but we remained hopeful that together we would find a solution because the Chair instructed a Board member to request that the item be agendaized for discussion at its next Board meeting. To our great disappointment, we came to find out that the item was not included in the agenda at the direction of the Chair.

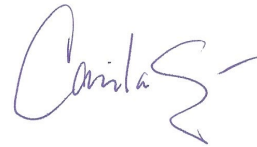
In an effort to show members of the Dental Board that we wish to work with them to address the shortage of dental care in our communities, we then reached out to members of the Dental Board only to be told that the members were prohibited from speaking to stakeholders, yet again, at the direction of the Chair.

The opposition we have received from the Dental Board, considering the vision of the Dental Board is to "be the leader in public protection, promotion of oral health, and access to care." is unwarranted. We urge you to include the item on the foreign dental school program, with an analysis on the data listed above, on the agenda for your next board meeting on November 7th. Our communities need dental care now.

Sincerely,



Dolores Huerta
President



Camila Chavez
Executive Director

Cc. Robert Rivas, Speaker of the Assembly
Eloise Gomez Reyes, Assemblymember
Marc Berman, Chair, Assembly Committee on Business & Professions