



Rhode Island

DENTAL ASSOCIATION

April 2, 2026

S2862 Against with Recommendation

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Senator Murray and members of the committee:

We oppose the bill only in its current form, since we acknowledge it as a constructive first step. Rhode Island's dental licensure system must rest on uniform, verifiable standards for education, clinical competency, and patient safety. International dental programs differ widely in curriculum, clinical experience, infection control, and accreditation oversight. Without a rigorous equivalency framework, the state risks creating two different pathways into the profession—one for U.S. graduates and another for internationally trained dentists.

The bill language lacks:

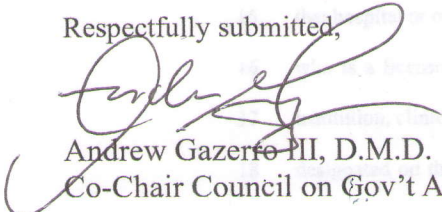
- **A validated process** to evaluate foreign dental curricula
- **A mechanism** to assess clinical competency equivalency
- **Clear pathways** for remediation or supplemental training
- **Sufficient administrative capacity** within the Board of Examiners to manage these reviews

Proceeding without these systems could produce regulatory confusion, inconsistent decisions, and legal exposure. Dentistry is a surgical profession; any change that affects who may perform irreversible procedures must be handled with the utmost care. Until Rhode Island can ensure that internationally trained applicants meet the same clinical standards as U.S.-trained graduates, patient safety and public trust could be compromised.

Rhode Island does face workforce shortages in certain specialties, but allowing internationally trained dentists to apply for licensure alone will not necessarily ensure that they will practice in shortage areas, accept state dental assistance patients, or remain in Rhode Island long term.

That said, with further study and input, this concept could without a doubt expand access to care and as leaders of Rhode Island's dental community, we welcome the opportunity to work along with you to develop such a program.

Respectfully submitted,


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Co-Chair Council on Gov't Affairs