

Honorable delegates, ladies, and gentlemen!

Good morning,

I am Kochai Jan Jawed, a former Afghan Pediatric surgeon with 18 years' clinical experience. In addition to my work at the tertiary level care hospital in Kabul, I served as the director of licensing and registration for the Afghanistan medical council

At different points in my career, I was the acting medical director and head of emergency care. I also oversaw the health management information systems (HMIS) department.

I have lectured and led medical workshops for USAID and the World Health Organization and received awards for my work from the Afghan Ministry of Health and our Afghan Senate, and House

Like so many Afghans, I was forced to flee with my family when the government collapsed in August 2021.

Without the help of the U.S. government and the U.S. Army, I would not have arrived to safety. The United States has given me support and offered me a new homeland, for which I am forever grateful.

It is my deepest hope to give back to my new homeland especially through my medical service.

With trust of God and support from many American families, friends, and society in general, I have been able to restart my medical journey as a *Joseph E. Robert, Jr. Fellow in Pediatric Surgical Innovation* at the Children's National Hospital, Washington, D.C.

This fellowship is temporary and does provide a pathway back to clinical work. I do not know what comes next when this six month program is over. Still, I am so much more fortunate than so many other Afghan and refugee doctors. So far, I have six published and three awaiting publications, and more projects are underway, which shows I can do something beneficial for my new country. Meanwhile, I am eagerly looking for a way to return to clinical work treating children in need.

Hearing about the HB995 legislation brought back hope and a smile to my face. I stand here before you asking for your support. Passing HB995 would allow IMGs like me and so many others to use our talents for the people of Virginia and in a small way, it would allow me to serve the country and the people who have done so much for me. .

Thank you very much for your time and continued support.