* Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Kyle Martin and I am an orthopedic surgeon working in Central Minnesota. I am originally from Winnipeg Canada, which is where I completed my undergraduate degree, medical school, and orthopedic surgery residency. Following the completion of my residency, I travelled to Oslo Norway and worked there for one year, and then I spent one year working at Mayo Clinic in Rochester Minnesota.
* For my time at Mayo Clinic, I was in the United States on a J-visa.
* When my time at Mayo came to an end, I transitioned to an H1B visa to work in Central Minnesota. As some background, there are two ways to obtain an H1B visa to work as a physician – the most common is to complete the three steps of the Unites States Medical Licensing examination, or USMLE, while the second is to obtain an exemption to that USMLE requirement. As a Canadian, I did not take the USMLE examination and so I applied for and was granted an H1B exemption based on the work I have done and continue to do. The H1B exemption granted by USCIS is for a physician who is recognized to be of international or national renown.
* So I am currently working in Central Minnesota on my H1B and also hold a full Minnesota medical license but I am currently not eligible for permanent residency because of my previous J visa status. This means that at the conclusion of my 6-year H1B visa I will have to leave the country. This fact remains until I either leave the United States for 2 years or obtain a J Visa waiver through the Conrad waiver program.
* The Federally administered Conrad waiver program allows physicians to waive the 2-year home country return requirement if working in medically underserved areas, and the State decides who can apply for the waiver.
* In Minnesota it is currently a requirement to have the USMLE completed to be considered for the Conrad program – and this is not a federal requirement
* Given my situation, our proposal is to allow a physician such as myself with a full license to practice medicine in Minnesota to be eligible for the waiver recommendation in place of the USMLE requirement.