

Ricarra Jones, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East

Date: March 10, 2020

Committee: Economic Matters

Legislation: Testimony on HB 1448 – Guidelines for Classification of Employees and Independent Contractors

Position: Favorable

Dear Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones and I am the Director of Political Action for 1199SEIU. We represent 10,000 healthcare workers throughout Maryland and DC in hospitals, nursing homes and clinics. 1199 SUPPORTS HB 1448 and requests a favorable report by this committee.

As representatives of healthcare workers and leaders in the “Fight for Fifteen,” 1199 has talked to many workers who complain of poor wages and job quality. Some of these workers have been wrongly classified as independent contractors. We know that there’s a lot of misinformation about when a worker is an independent contractor or an employee. For example, we know that personal care aides and workers in assisted living facilities – along with non-healthcare workers like security guards, janitorial workers, landscapers, construction workers, and many others – are often wrongly misclassified as 1099 independent contractors by their employers. This practice results in making the conditions for these workers even worse: they lose overtime wages, travel-time wages and other benefits that they should be receiving as employees, like the availability of workers’ comp, unemployment insurance, and protection from employment discrimination.

Misclassification of workers hurts everyone. It hurts the workers who may not be receiving minimum wage, overtime pay or other critical benefits. It hurts Marylanders as a whole, because the state loses employment taxes when workers are misclassified. Leveling the playing field for small to mid-sized businesses to have the same information as larger ones, will be a benefit to all Marylanders.

This bill ensures that all small and mid-size businesses in Maryland across industries are given all the information they need in a plain-language document to comply with existing state employment laws. All businesses – large or small – should be complying with state employment laws and 1199 supports this effort to ensure this happens.