



**Testimony on SB172**  
***Maryland Health Equity Resource Act***  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU- the largest healthcare union in the nation, where we represent over 10,000 healthcare workers in Maryland. Given the need to rectify gross health inequities in Maryland, we are supportive of SB0172- the Maryland Health Equity Resource Act.

All Marylanders deserve access to high-quality, affordable health care, regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, and place of residence. Unfortunately, deep inequities in service and affordability exist throughout the state. Many majority-minority regions suffer from healthcare disparities such as, heart disease, asthma, diabetes, and substance disorders. The rising cost of healthcare, abided with a lack of resources, funding, and socioeconomic opportunities, increases difficulties in obtaining care, even amidst a pandemic. The creation of Health Equity Resource Communities through this Act will assist with reducing these inequities.

Based on findings from previous pilots, equity zones created from the Act will prevent unequal outcomes and lower health care costs. It could also curb underage drinking, binge drinking and driving under the influence. For 1199SEIU members- the majority of whom are minorities- this Act is vital their job services and personal lives. Not only would this Act help better direct healthcare resources that our members provide, but this Act would also improve health outcomes and affordability for members.

For this reason, we believe that this Act will create the necessary structure in place to improve overall health equity for historically marginalized Marylanders and ask that you support the Maryland Health Equity Resource Act of 2021.

Respectfully,

Ricarra Jones  
Maryland/DC Political Director  
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