



**Testimony on HB097**  
***Digital Connectivity Act of 2021***  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Mr. Chair and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

My name is Christopher Stevenson, and I am a Senior Policy Analyst with 1199SEIU- the largest healthcare union in the nation, where we represent over 10,000 healthcare workers in the state of Maryland. Given the vast amount of benefits that internet access gives to our members as well as the public, we are adamantly supportive of HB097- the Digital Connectivity Act of 2021.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, internet access has given our members the ability to digest, obtain, and transfer information through various channels to combat COVID-19. In Maryland, ensuring that healthcare workers can engage in these actions is vitally important and many healthcare workers rely on the internet to advance current healthcare solutions.

In the inception of the internet, it had been used as a luxury for families but given the technologically advanced society that we live in, it has now become a need of every family. The internet is a primary system of transactions that allows our members the ability to send patients their medicine electronically, it allows our members the ability to research and analyze healthcare complications to treat the public, and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has allowed our members to be able to facilitate telehealth appointments to maintain the public's ability to manage their health.

Now more than ever, the internet must be available and accessible to every Maryland resident. The internet can no longer be a privilege but a right. To do this, the internet must be made affordable to all Marylanders to ensure that no matter their economic background, every resident is able to afford this modern necessity of life. The Digital Connectivity Act of 2021 Act does exactly this and therefore, increases the digital literacy and avenues of opportunity to live a better life for all Marylanders.

For this reason, we humbly ask this Committee to support the Digital Connectivity Act of 2021.

Respectfully,

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