



Testimony on SB204
Health Care Facilities – Assisted Living Programs – Memory Care and Alzheimer’s Disease
Unit Regulations
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Finance 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 provide quality healthcare for patients who suffer from Alzheimer’s disease, as well as the need to provide effective staff procedures to Alzheimer’s patients, we support HB204- Health Care Facilities – Assisted Living Programs – Memory Care and Alzheimer’s Disease Unit Regulations.

In the state of Maryland, Alzheimer’s is a reality that plagues the lives of many senior citizens. As reported by the Alzheimer’s Association, in 2020 an estimated 110,000 senior citizens were found to have been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in Maryland, and by 2025, an estimate of 130,00 seniors will be plagued by this disease. While the search for the cure for Alzheimer’s disease continues, this bill mandates administrators and direct care staff to be properly trained annually on dementia-care matters. In doing so, this mandate would allow staff in various direct care institutions to provide modern care and techniques to assist Alzheimer’s patients with their disease. Equally as important, this bill allows for ratio patterns to exist in order to properly staff each patient that deals with Alzheimer’s disease.

For 1199SEIU members who are our healthcare workers that tend to patients with Alzheimer’s and dementia-related diseases every day, this legislation is unequivocally necessary. Throughout this pandemic and before, our members continue to deal with a lack of training on how to properly care for Alzheimer’s patients. To make matters worse, many of our members must go outside of their normal work hours and responsibilities to attend to Alzheimer’s patients, in which they improperly mitigate mental health-related incidents. This not only throws the time schedule that our workers must keep assisting other patients, but it also puts both patient and staff at-risk for injury due to lack of training.

For this reason, we believe that this Act will create the necessary structure in place to improve overall training for staff and better healthcare quality for patients with Alzheimer’s disease. We ask this Committee to please support SB204.

Respectfully,

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