



**Testimony of Ricarra Jones, Political Director of 1199SEIU on
SB 778 Maryland Medical Assistance Program –
Children and Pregnant Women
(Healthy Babies Equity Act)
Position: FAVORABLE
March 8, 2022**

Dear Chairwoman [Delores G. Kelley](#) and Members of the Finance Committee:

1199SEIU Healthcare Workers East is the largest healthcare union in the country with, with over 450,000 members throughout Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Florida and Washington, D.C. **We fully support SB 778.**

SB 778 The Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Children and Pregnant Women (Healthy Babies Equity Act) would positively impact noncitizen women and young children by providing them with medical care and other health services which are currently unavailable to noncitizens residing in Maryland.

The Healthy Babies Equity Act would require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program (the “Program”) to provide comprehensive medical care and other health care services to noncitizen pregnant women who would be eligible for the Program but for their immigration status, and also to their children up the age of one year.

Every pregnant woman should have access to prenatal care, postnatal care, and support for their new baby, regardless of their legal status. Providing this essential care to all mothers and children should be a priority for Maryland.

Without this Bill, noncitizen pregnant women and their young children will remain ineligible for important and fundamental medical care despite the fact that they live in our communities and are in great need of these services.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT SB 778** and ask for a **FAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones
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