



Testimony on SB677  
Maryland Health Care Commission – Nursing Homes – Audit  
Position: **FAVORABLE**

My name is Danny Mendoza. I live in Montgomery County. I'm a Bilingual Public Benefits and Insurance Navigator at Whitman Walker Health and a member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, the largest healthcare workers union in the country. I have ten thousand 1199SEIU comrades who live & work across Maryland/DC in hospitals and nursing homes. Our union supports SB677 and urges the committee to issue a favorable report because this legislation will provide much needed oversight in Long Term Care facilities.

For years, there has been a massive short-staffing crisis in Long Term Care facilities, and that crisis has been made even more severe due to COVID19. Members of 1199 are often treating nearly double the number of patients than they are supposed to care for. When facilities are so short staffed, it reduces the overall quality of patient care, risks the medical licenses of healthcare workers, causes significant worker burnout, and leads to healthcare workers quitting working in the healthcare field entirely.

During the first year of the pandemic my department alone lost over half of our staff. I, along with thousands of other health care workers have felt the added burden of short staffing on a daily basis. The everyday ramifications of this are; patients being unable to access their life-saving medications, unsafe working conditions for staff, long wait times for patients across the board, and many other health hazards.

Annual audits of Long-Term Care facilities that include survey questions on working conditions, wages, hours, and overtime will ensure that management is not wasting or misappropriating funds that must rightfully go directly to workers in the form of wage increases; and ensure that there are better working conditions. Higher wages and appropriate staffing ratios are critically important to reducing the short staffing crisis in Long Term Care facilities so patients can receive more attentive care and so that workers don't burn out. I urge the committee to vote yes on SB677. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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