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Testimony of Ricarra Jones, Political Director of 1199SEIU
SB 780 – Economic Stabilization Act - Revisions
Position: SUPPORT
February 27, 2020

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Dear Chairwoman Delores Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

1199SEIU Healthcare Workers East (1199SEIU) 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 any and all measures such as this important piece of legislation designed to protect Maryland working families.**

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Every day, the members of 1199SEIU save lives, deliver babies and care for the sick, seniors and people with disabilities. We are nurses, nurse aides, techs, lab workers, clerks, housekeepers, dietary workers, transporters, pharmacists, social workers and many other types of medical professionals. It is often said that a safety net exists for the patients and other individuals we provide care for, however, no such safety net exists for our hardworking members when they are blindsided by the sudden loss of income.

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At a minimum, our members should be given reasonable notice when they are going to be laid off: Sixty days is not enough time to find comparable work, save money, and prepare for potential unemployment. Most large companies make closure decisions well in advance of 60 days from the closure and giving employees 90 days-notice gives them more time to prepare without putting an undue burden on the employer.

Equally important as providing ample notice is the importance of ensuring that companies with over 50 employees in the state be required to comply despite the fact that it may have multiple work sites with smaller numbers of employees. If a company - like most, if not all of the nonprofit hospitals in the state that many of our members are employed with - has a large workforce, then the fact that these employees are situated at multiple sites should not prevent those employees from getting adequate notice and severance. Shoppers is a perfect example of this – the company got out of even the 60 day notice requirement at some stores because they did not have over 50 employees who had worked over 20 hours a week in the past year, leaving those employees with sometimes as little as a two-week advanced notice that they would soon be unemployed. **We must do right by Maryland working families.**

For all of these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report for Senate Bill 780.

GENERAL COUNSEL
Daniel J. Ratner

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER &
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION
Michael Cooperman