



Testimony: SB 230

Position: Favorable with Sponsor Amendments

Residential Service Agencies – Employee Registry

Dear Chair Griffith and the members of the Finance committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation – representing 10,000 healthcare workers in long-term care facilities and hospitals across Maryland. We are proud members of the Caring Across Maryland coalition supporting SB 230 Homecare Worker Registry with sponsor amendments and we urge the Committee to issue a favorable report.

Building a strong care infrastructure starts with addressing the care gap. According to the Department of Aging, Maryland’s population of those aged 65 and older is estimated to increase by 40%. The projected need for home care workers is expected to increase by 33% with 74,000 openings by 2030¹.

SB 230 establishes a registry of all homecare workers employed by residential service agencies in the state. A homecare registry is a vital state oversight tool to know whether our home care workforce meets varying patient needs. It can help to strengthen the homecare work force by understanding training needs and retention trends in the state and most importantly, improve the care patients receive in their homes.

We are favorable to this bill with the following sponsor **amendments**:

- The registry must be available to the public.
- Ensure that this bill does not exclude workers hired by residential service agencies that are independent contractors.
- Ensure that this bill applies to residential services agencies that provide personal care services not only home health care.
- Lastly, erase language about employees who are survivors of domestic violence, rape, or sexual assault since regulations includes protections for workers who do not want to provide their names.

Caregiving is personal work and a gender and racial equity issue. Home care or personal care aides provide essential support for individuals with long term conditions or disabilities in people’s homes providing assistance with personal care such as bathing, dressing, mobility, toilet care, and eating. Personal Care Aides also help patients with housekeeping, transportation, and social or employment activities outside the home. Both workers and the individuals requiring services are disproportionately

1. “Phi’s Workforce Data Center.” *PHI*, 24 Jan. 2023, <https://www.phinational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/#var=Employment+Projections&states=24>.

people of color. The care force is disproportionately women; disproportionately Black, Hispanic, and Asian American/Pacific Islander women; and in many cases immigrant women.

A workforce registry specifically for home care aides providing personal care has multiple functionalities. Tracks training needs and workforce development areas of growth. More than half of home care agencies lack defined career paths or educational resources to support the advancement of their staff which is key for worker recruitment and retention.

Workforce registries are vital state oversight tool. In Maryland, Howard County has created a home care registry which includes training and certification information so that patients are able to find a worker that best meets their needs in the county. Maryland's registry of licensed child care providers serves a similar role that can be replicated for home care workers. States such as Massachusetts and California have already implemented a home care worker registry which has allowed the state to adequately address the growing need for home care services with a well-supported homecare workforce.

The lack of a robust care infrastructure in the state leaves consumers struggling to find workers and maintain work relationships with them. Establishing a home care registry is the first step to adequately addressing Maryland's growing need for homecare workers. For those reasons and more, we urge a favorable report on SB 180.

In unity,

Ricarra Jones

Political Director

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1. "Phi's Workforce Data Center." *PHI*, 24 Jan. 2023, <https://www.phinational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/#var=Employment+Projections&states=24>.