



Metro Washington Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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An AFL-CIO “Union City”

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Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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Madam Chair and members of the Health and Government Committee:

On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council, its 200 affiliates, and the over 150,000 rank-and-file members the council represents, I am writing in support of House Bill 318 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aides - Reimbursement and Wages.

House Bill 318 will ensure that Home Healthcare workers receive an increase in their hourly wages. Many of these workers earn above-poverty wages with an annual income of approximately **\$34,000.00**. After living through a global pandemic, I believe we all understand how essential these workers are to the healthcare system.

Furthermore, the recent shortages prove that low wages, coupled with no benefits, will ensure that companies cannot retain the top-quality workers that the most vulnerable citizens of our society deserve.

Lastly, most Home Healthcare workers are women and women of color. Recent statistics show that about 90% are women, and about 70% are Black. This legislation will help uplift an intersection of the population who have systematically been left behind.

In closing, other states, such as Maine, have already passed a similar law in 2021, which increased reimbursement rates while requiring that Medicaid-funded workers be paid at least 25% more than minimum wage – which now equates to a wage floor of **\$17.25 per hour**. It's time for Maryland to join states like Maine and put our workers first.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony. I ask for a favorable vote on House Bill 318.

In Solidarity,

Dyana Forester
President

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