

## **Testimony in Support of HB 318**

### **Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aides - Reimbursement and Wages**

Dear Chair Pena-Melynk and members of the Health, Government, and Operations committee:

My name is Fatimah and I live in Baltimore County. I have been a home care aid for 5 years. I am single mother of three children and I am here today because for too long home care workers have been underpaid and overworked. We have been invisible to rest of society as we travel to people's homes ensuring they are able to do their daily tasks safely and with support. I believe that care workers are the backbone of this economy allowing loved ones to return to work and ensure our clients age in place.

I immigrated to Maryland from Gambia. I know that caregiving has been undervalued in this country due to historical legacies of racism, sexism, and xenophobia. Many are leaving the field because of poor pay, lack of adequate benefits, and risky working conditions. I could not pay my rent for three months because of irregular hours and low pay.

I am here today to fight for me and my family, for home care workers in the state but also for my patients who deserve consistent caregivers. The work we do is physically and emotionally challenging and when I go home, I must make sure I can pay all my bills and take care of my own health.

I do this work because providing care is important to me, but I am underpaid and burnt out trying to make ends meet for me and my family. It's long overdue for the state to invest in us, care workers, and ensure we are getting adequately paid.

Because care can't wait, I urge you to issue a favorable report HB 318.

Sincerely,

Fatimah Jallow

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