



Testimony on SB328
The Nursing Home Staffing Crisis Act of 2024
Position: **FAV**

To Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee,

My name is Ditanya Rosebud. I am a Cook in a Long Term Care facility in Baltimore and a member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. I've worked in food preparation for healthcare facilities for 26 years, and have been employed at my current facility for 10 years. I urge you to issue a favorable report on The Nursing Home Staffing Crisis Act of 2024.

My job is to prepare meals for the residents of the Long Term Care facility, where we have a new menu every week. I work the lunch and dinner shifts, so I prepare 60 meals per day. I'm also responsible for ensuring that the meals are all in accordance with the resident's dietary restrictions and wrapping the meals up afterward. I enjoy the work I do because preparing food is such an important way to care for people. Providing care is why I decided to enter this line of work.

My facility has been short staffed since the COVID19 pandemic hit, and it is only getting worse as time goes on. Before short staffing, I was cooking for 14-15 people, now I cook for 30. I miss the days preceding the short staffing crisis because we were able to have more of a family dynamic with the residents where we could spend quality time with them and customize their meals. The social aspect of dining was something that made the residents and the workers feel good. We used to cook in different "households" throughout the facility, but when management started short staffing the facility we were all directed to move to the main kitchen where there is no interaction with residents whatsoever. Now, the work feels more like being on an assembly line than providing healthcare.

Raising wages for workers in Long Term Care will help fix the problem of chronic short staffing because it would make those of us who have been working through this crisis feel more appreciated and less likely to quit. Short staffing is an issue in every department, not just in the kitchen, so we need to make sure to raise wages across the board. That would really boost workers' morale.

With the cost of living being so high, every month I have to make impossible choices like whether I pay the BGE or the water bill, because I can't afford to do both. I care for my two grandchildren. If I got a wage increase and could pay all my bills, I would spend anything extra on improving the quality of life for them. My grandchildren play sports and I want to be able to afford to buy them more nutritious foods, but those are the foods that are most expensive.

Healthcare workers are tired of being overworked and underpaid. We need to be able to care for our loved ones like we care for yours. Please vote yes on SB328 to raise our wages. Thank you.

Sincerely, Ditanya Rosebud