



Testimony on HB1194/SB1020

Safe Staffing Act of 2024

Position: **FAV**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dee Helmick. I am a Patient Transporter at a hospital and a member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. Patient Transporters literally keep the hospital operations moving, but our department is severely understaffed. We are in dire need of a legislative solution, so I urge you to issue a **favorable** report on HB1194/SB1020: Safe Staffing Act of 2024.

Short staffing creates dangerous working conditions. Recently I pulled my groin while moving a patient. I had to beg and yell for help, but no one was around to come to my aid. There are days when I get home from work and crawl around my house because my body can't stand up anymore. I'm developing back issues. A few weeks ago I got COVID with symptoms. A manager told me I still needed to come to work and instructed me to "just wear a mask and try not to cough." If a manager gets sick, they are allowed to stay home.

Patient Transporters discharge patients in hazardous weather conditions, but management won't purchase jackets for our uniforms or let us wear our own jackets. I've had to work shifts completely drenched because we don't have raincoats or time to change into dry clothing. So it's not surprising that people in my department are getting sick and calling out frequently. Management bought themselves nice jackets while telling workers they couldn't get us jackets – even though we're the ones who stand in the rain and snow – due to "budget shortages."

This culture of disrespect cultivated by management contributes to short staffing in our hospital. The Safe Staffing Act will foster a collaborative environment where workers are respected by requiring that we are 50% of the safe staffing committee. No one cares more about safe staffing than workers do. Vote YES on this bill.

In Unity, Dee Helmick