



Testimony on HB1194/SB1020

Safe Staffing Act of 2024

Position: **FAV**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shaniqua Covington. I'm a Unit Operating Room Associate at a hospital, and a member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. Hospital workers do this job because we want to make a positive difference in people's lives. We CARE. It's hard to see our patients hurting due to chronic short staffing. So I am speaking out, and urging you to issue a **favorable** report on HB1194/SB1020: Safe Staffing Act of 2024.

I position patients for surgery, transport specimens, body parts, and labs to and from the operating room, and support the surgeons and nurses. Support staff like me are the backbone of the hospital. We are often the only ones that patients get to have casual conversations with. Doctors and nurses are clinical, while we get to ask the patient how they are feeling, what they think of the weather, and anything else that helps the patient feel comfortable. We also advocate for our patients.

The Operating Room is short staffed every day. We frequently delay or reschedule surgeries, which is particularly burdensome on patients who travel long distances to our hospital. Wait times to receive care, medication, and test results have increased as a result of short staffing. This impacts patients greatly. When a patient sits for too long in one position because there aren't enough workers, they are at a higher risk of developing bed sores, falling, and contracting pneumonia.

This bill is the tool we need to fix short staffing because it requires that 50% of the safe staffing committee be workers. We are the ones on the frontlines of the short staffing crisis. We are the ones with the solutions.

Anyone could end up in the hospital. You'd want your hospital to have a Safe Staffing Committee if you did. Please vote YES on this bill so we can end the short staffing crisis.

In Unity,  
Shaniqua Covington