



Testimony on HB1194/SB1020

Safe Staffing Act of 2024

Position: **FAV**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Antonia Brooks. I'm a Physical Medicine Rehabilitation Technician II in the Intensive Care Unit at a hospital, and a member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. I work short staffed at least twice a week. There are long emergency department wait times, and patients are being treated in the hallways because there aren't rooms available. I am a healthcare worker because I care about people, and I believe access to healthcare is a human right. Short staffing delays that right. I urge a **favorable** report on HB1194 / SB1020: The Safe Staffing Act of 2024. This bill will improve patient care, reduce emergency department wait times, and increase worker morale.

I treat 24 patients per day, helping them walk and sit up, and providing respiratory assistance. I work alongside the doctors, nurses, and therapists. On days we are short staffed, I assist in other areas too. That means I spend half as much time with my patients on short days. Treatments that patients are supposed to receive daily often get postponed because of short staffing.

We are short staffed because healthcare workers are underpaid and overworked. High patient volume and running from building to building is exhausting. Workers are quitting soon after being hired because they are required to take on work outside of the job description they were hired for. Some describe the hiring process as false advertising.

Right now, when workers bring our concerns about short staffing to management, their responses seem performative because the problem isn't getting better. The Safe Staffing Act of 2024 will change that by giving workers like me an opportunity to bring our solutions to the table. I'm excited to volunteer to serve on my hospital's safe staffing committee when this bill passes! Please vote YES on HB1194 / SB1020. Thank you.

In Unity,
Anotnia Brooks