



Testimony on HB1194/SB1020
Safe Staffing Act of 2024
Position: **FAV**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Debra K. I'm a Patient Care Technician at a hospital, and a member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. I urge a **favorable** report on HB1194/SB1020: Safe Staffing Act of 2024 because I can't remember the last time I had sufficient staffing at work. Workers and our patients deserve better.

I work 12 hour shifts, serving 14 patients at a time. I help them with things like drinking, eating, hygiene, and getting in and out of bed. I monitor vital signs and perform EKGs. I also deliver food to patients in isolation with infectious diseases. Being compassionate to my patients is what I love about the work that I do.

Short staffing is hard mentally, emotionally, and physically. When we work short, patients have to wait for care. Staffing shortages are so severe that Maryland has the longest Emergency Department wait times in the country! And that's just to get your foot in the door, there's more waiting on the other side. So, patients get frustrated. I've been cursed at and I've had things thrown at me. Some days, I think about giving up.

Two weeks ago I had a patient who was calling for a tech for 12 HOURS, but there was only one tech working the night shift, so no one ever came to help her. 12 hours with no water. 12 hours unable to move. 12 hours! I helped her take a shower and calmed her down. Feeling cared for transformed her, and seeing how happy she became brought me joy too. But, those moments are rare because we always have to be on to the next task.

I want to be able to keep the CARE in healthcare. That is why we need the Safe Staffing Act! Every hospital needs a committee to make a safe staffing plan, and half the committee must be workers. We are the ones who live the short staffing crisis everyday. Therefore, we are the ones with the solutions. I'll be the first worker at my hospital to sign up for our Committee. Please vote YES on this bill. Thank you.

In Unity, Debra K.