



Testimony on HB905
The Safe Staffing Act of 2025
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Andre Johnson. I've worked at a hospital for 26+ years and am currently working in the Environmental Service Department. Short staffing is present at every level of our hospital, impacting everyone from EVS to nurses, general staff, transporters, and nutrition workers. Patient care should be the number one goal of every hospital, but short staffing is hurting the quality of care. I support HB905: The Safe Staffing Act and urge a **favorable** report.

The whole care team contributes to the wellness of the patients. My department keeps the hospital clean, which is important for reducing the spread of infections. Years ago, my department had over 730 workers. As of last year, we had around 400. Around five people call out every day. Workers do our best, but one person can only do so much: hospitals are meant to function as a team setting, and we can't work as a team when we are so understaffed.

Short staffing is dangerous because there is so much pressure on the workers. We put our own health at risk, and stress kills. Workers still have to feed our families, and that fact is used as a tool to manipulate us into working in unsafe conditions. We do multiple jobs all at once because management knows we don't have the luxury to just quit and start something new. Our families depend on us.

I remember seeing a worsening in the short staffing crisis before COVID. During the worst of the pandemic, I saw my coworkers put their lives, and their families' lives, in danger to do what they loved: making people well again. Hospital management saw it was operating understaffed during COVID, but years later, they still haven't done anything to fix it. The hospital I work at used to be proactive, now it's reactive. Safe staffing committees would change that so we can implement real solutions.

Passing the Safe Staffing Act would require hospitals to be transparent about staffing levels. Right now, it feels like management is trying to hide the reality that we are short-staffed. Our vacation requests are frequently denied, and when we ask why, we are told that it's because of short staffing. But that isn't our fault—we work hard and deserve our PTO. The onus should be on management to staff our workplace appropriately so that we have the benefits and protections that we are owed. How can we maintain high value work performance when we can't even take a break and are burned out from being overworked? It's like a tire stuck in the mud, spinning its wheels but not going anywhere.

I was raised to be a fighter and to stick up for people who need help. These are values I have shared with my children and grandchildren as well. I can see right now that my coworkers and I are being taken advantage of by hospital management, facing dangerous staffing shortages that make our jobs borderline impossible and negatively impact patient care. That's why I would absolutely volunteer to be on the safe staffing committee when this bill becomes law. Please vote YES. Thank you.

In Unity, Andre Johnson