

# Solidaridad Action Committee

*Of the Gamma Alpha Chapter of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Incorporada*

## **Testimony on HB 0905 - Favorable**

HB0905 Hospitals - Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans - Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2025)

Senate Finance Committee

March 28, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

My name is Valeria Salcedo, I am a life-long Marylander, a Public Health Policy graduate student at The George Washington University, and a sister of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Incorporada (SIA). I am writing on behalf of The Solidaridad Action Committee (SAC) of the Gamma Alpha Chapter (GA) of SIA. SAC offers a **favorable** testimony in support of **HB0905 Hospitals - Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans - Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2025)**. SIA, inc., is a Latina based but not Latina exclusive sorority with a large membership base throughout the state of Maryland. Our organization includes many women from various backgrounds currently studying at the University Maryland, College Park, Towson University, Johns Hopkins University, and McDaniel College with hopes of soon entering the medical field. Our membership also includes alumnae currently working in Maryland hospitals.

Our sorority takes pride in having a significant membership of working-class, first-generation college-educated Latinas. Despite facing structural inequalities, we have worked tirelessly to gain access to higher education, striving to afford tuition while pushing ourselves academically to enter the professional workforce. Many of our sisters are currently studying to pursue careers in healthcare or are already making an impact as medical professionals. They recall experiences of translating for their parents in hospitals, where staff was unable to effectively communicate or understand their linguistic and cultural needs, leading to inadequate care. This inspired them to become changemakers, break through systemic barriers with grit and determination, and vigorously pursue medicine to one day address a need felt deeply by our families and communities.

Many states had implemented their own staffing requirements after seeing the growth in association between the understaffing of nurses and the outcome of those under their care. Per a study conducted by the Center of Health Outcomes and Policy Research at University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) in 2010, it showed that California's 2006 requirements reduced the workload of nurses by one to two patients, which led to a significant decrease in patient mortality rate compared to states with no requirements. In New Jersey and Pennsylvania, there would have been 13.9% and 10.6% fewer deaths if their patient-to-nurse ratios were equal to that of California's.

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Maryland's hospitals are experiencing a workforce shortage, with the gap being even more pronounced when considering the underrepresentation of Latina medical professionals. Given the systemic inequalities Latinas already face, it is important that Maryland ensures that hospital staff are given a voice to better the conditions that medical workers endure as *a matter of equity*. This is why the Safe Staffing Act of 2025 is so important to us. Many Latinas, have faced challenges when entering or trying to enter the medical field, saddled with student debt, and find increased obstacles in Maryland's hospitals that are underpaid and overburdened. With poor treatment in these facilities, hospitals fail at staff retention - and this directly impacts the experiences that Latines face both as staff and patients. The Safe Staffing act would give workers the opportunity to share their experiences and offer input regarding worker conditions. Supporting the Safe Staffing Act would help many of our Latina medical professionals stay and enter the medical field to fulfill the promises they made to their communities.

**The Solidaridad Action Committee of SIA's GA urges the Senate Finance Committee to provide a favorable report on HB0905.**