



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

KATE STEWART
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 4

February 16, 2026

POSITION OF Councilmember Kate Stewart, District 4: **SUPPORT**

House Bill 624 and Senate Bill 411 - Safe Staffing Act of 2026

Chairwomen Bagnall and Beidle, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 624 and Senate Bill 411, the *Safe Staffing Act of 2026*. I'm writing today in my role as the 4th District Councilmember, but not officially on behalf of the Montgomery County Council. This crucial legislation would require that our state's private hospitals establish clinical staffing committees, made up of hospital management and our excellent healthcare workers, ensuring that Marylanders in every corner of our state receive the quality of care they deserve.

Montgomery County and the State of Maryland are facing a multifaceted healthcare crisis exacerbated by the cruelty of the Trump Administration, challenging fiscal tides, and a devastating shortage of nurses. Maryland currently holds the distinction of having the longest emergency room wait times in the country. We must start implementing policies that ease this burden on our hospitals, nurses, and most importantly, the people they care for before these challenges get worse.

The *Safe Staffing Act* will be an important step forward in both delivering better healthcare for patients and improving the conditions for our dedicated healthcare workforce. The purpose of these safe staffing committees will be to identify and implement reasonable staff-to-patient ratios in each individual hospital that will prevent our nurses from facing an overload of patients and our patients from waiting an inordinate number of hours for care. Placing these committees in our hospitals, where staffing and care challenges vary from workplace to workplace, will ensure these much needed improved standards are not a mandate but consider the needs of our nurses, hospitals, and above all else our patients.

Accordingly, I am urging **FAVORABLE** reports on HB 624 from the House Health Committee and SB 411 from the Senate Finance Committee. For more information, please contact my office at councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov.