

**HB0624\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV**

02/18/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON HB#/0624- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Hospitals - Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans - Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2026)**

**TO:** Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0624, **Hospitals - Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans - Establishment (Safe Staffing Act of 2026)**

Maryland consistently has the longest emergency room (ER) wait times in the United States, with average waits frequently exceeding four hours and some, such as at [UM Capital Region Medical Center](#), reaching up to 17–24 hours. Key factors driving these delays include severe staffing shortages, high patient volume, and a lack of available hospital beds. <sup>1</sup>

The Maryland [Safe Staffing Act of 2026](#) (HB411/HB905) aims to improve hospital safety by requiring the establishment of clinical staffing committees with equal management-employee representation. These committees must create, implement, and annually update comprehensive staffing plans for patient units, with enforcement and public posting required by January 1, 2028. <sup>2</sup>

Key Aspects of the 2026 Safe Staffing Legislation:

- Clinical Staffing Committees
- Plan Requirements
- Implementation & Compliance
- Public Transparency.

The legislation aims to address the state's severe staffing shortages and high emergency room waiting times.

This legislation will address Maryland's long emergency room wait times by enabling frontline staff to participate in decision-making.

Maryland can make this happen by requiring certain hospitals licensed in the State to establish and maintain a clinical staffing committee and to implement a clinical staffing plan; requiring each clinical staffing committee to develop a clinical staffing plan; requiring, on or before July 1 each year, each hospital's clinical staffing committee to conduct a review of the clinical staffing plan for certain purposes; requiring, on or before January 1, 2028, each hospital to implement a clinical staffing plan and assign personnel in accordance with the plan; etc.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0624.**

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<sup>1</sup> Google AI Search "wait times in er in Maryland"

<sup>2</sup> Google AI Search "maryland safe staffing 2026"