



Testimony of Ricarra Jones, Political Director of 1199SEIU

**SB 641 – Maryland Wage and Hour Law and Maryland Wage Payment and Collection Law – Revisions
(Maryland Wage Protection Act)**

Position: FAVORABLE

February 27, 2020

Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

1199SEIU Healthcare Workers East (1199SEIU) is the largest healthcare union in the country with, with over 450,000 members throughout Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Florida and Washington, D.C. **We fully support any and all measures such as this important piece of legislation designed to protect Maryland working families.**

Every day, the members of 1199SEIU save lives, deliver babies and care for the sick, seniors and people with disabilities. We are nurses, nurse aides, techs, lab workers, clerks, housekeepers, dietary workers, transporters, pharmacists, social workers and many other types of medical professionals. Many of our members worked hard to advocate for the passage of the \$15 minimum wage legislation. We are very excited that hundreds of thousands of workers received well deserved raises. But a very important piece of the bill was left on the table because unfortunately in so many cases, we can't protect workers' pay.

This bill is critical to ensuring that Maryland workers actually receive the wages they have earned, and that the new \$15 minimum wage actually works in practice.

We support this legislation because it will close important loopholes. It will:

- **Protect employees from retaliation** so that victims of wage theft can enforce their right to be paid without fear of being fired, losing hours, being threatened, et cetera;
- **Promote transparency by requiring that paystubs contain information showing how pay was calculated**, such as hours worked, pay rate, and overtime.
- **Clarify that employees are broadly protected by wage laws** while independent contractors (people who are in business for themselves) are not.

Together, these protections ensure that Maryland's wage laws are properly followed, and that Marylanders can work with dignity, not just in theory but in practice.

We must do right by Maryland working families.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report for Senate Bill 641.