



HB581 -- Maryland Essential Workers Protection Act
Official Testimony
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To Chair Davis and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

My name is Janice Quintana. I am a Laundry Aide in a Long-Term Care Facility, where I have worked for 35 years because I love my patients and I love helping people. I'm also a union member with 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We need the MD Essential Workers Protection Act to keep me and my co-workers safe at our jobs.

Working during the COVID19 pandemic has been very challenging. I do whatever I can to help my patients who are sick, and it is hard to see them suffering. I'm sad when a patient I have been working with for years passes away to COVID19 before their time. It's upsetting that my workplace is not doing enough to protect me and my patients from this very contagious virus.

My job does not do a good enough job on reporting when employees and patients get COVID. There was an outbreak in my department and some people from different departments were blaming us for that. It is unfair to blame us for getting sick because we are not provided the quality PPE that the nurses and doctors get, even though we work closely with the patients too. Even when we do get PPE, it isn't enough. I had to re-wear my gown so much that it got so many holes in it. I went to my manager wearing my shredded gown and asked for a new one, all he said to me was "hmmmmm..." and I was not issued another gown. I work hard every day, and all I got was a "hmmmmm." That's not right. Another problem with the PPE is most of the time they only have it in one size. I've seen some of my co-workers walking around looking like the Incredible Hulk because their gowns were so small on them.

Another problem we have in my facility is our boss has been calling my co-workers who were out sick with COVID telling them they had to come back to work when they were still sick. One girl came back to work sick and was too sick to work so she got sent to the doctor, and the doctor said she should never been back in the first place! This made me angry because our boss making her come back to work put all of us at risk. It's shameful! Please pass the Maryland Essential Workers Protection Act this session because what I have been experiencing as an essential worker is unacceptable, and this bill would fix a lot of those problems. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Janice Quintana
Member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East