



Testimony on HB1193
Certified Nursing Assistants – Certificate Renewal – Training Program Requirements
Position: FAVORABLE with AMENDMENT

Madam Chair and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU- the largest healthcare union in the nation, where we represent over 10,000 healthcare workers in Maryland and DC. Given the amount of work that certified nursing assistants undergo while employed to care for various patients, we are supportive of HB119993- Certified Nursing Assistants – Certificate Renewal – Training Program Requirements.

Certified nursing assistants are healthcare workers that assist with activities of daily living for many behavioral health and disabled patients, as well as senior citizens. As such they are constantly tasked to help these at-risk populations by ensuring that their healthcare needs are met despite challenging issues such as the encounter of hostile or difficult patients. Unlike other healthcare fields, because CNAs are overseen by registered nurses and other healthcare officials, they are consequently held accountable and learn new job-related roles as tasked by their superiors. Due to this, this bill benefits CNAs by allowing them to exercise on-the-job training (“practice”) as a means to automatically renew their license.

For our members who are partly composed of certified nursing assistants, we believe this legislation would greatly benefit them. This legislation would make it easier for our members to renew their licenses by expanding the number of ways a renewal can occur. For many certified nursing assistants who are periodically overburdened with their work, this provides an avenue for CNAs to continue their work without taking time off of work to attend trainings. Moreover, the renewal Board may also automatically renew a CNA’s license at their discretion if their job mandates at least 16 hours of practice within 2 years after the license is renewed, in which case most CNAs obtain just by working.

Although this bill does benefit CNAs, we would only be supportive of this legislation if CNAs are given the current training opportunities (per the COVID-19 pandemic), to become geriatric nursing assistants. CNA’s should be given the opportunity to upgrade within 180 days of their certification as a GNA. It is not only critical for CNAs to work in this healthcare field, but it is equally important to continue the option of CNAs transitioning to a career that allows for economic and career upward mobility. We, therefore, ask this Committee to give a favorable report with the above amendment to HB1193.

Respectfully,

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