



**Testimony on HB078**  
***The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021***  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

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. Given the vast amount of data that the state could use to increase better healthcare quality for Marylanders, we are supportive of HB078- The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021.

It is no surprise to anyone that despite Maryland having state of that art healthcare facilities, many majority-minority regions all around Maryland suffer from healthcare disparities. Some of these disparities include acute and chronic diseases, access to healthy food and healthcare, behavioral health issues, as well as drug-related afflictions. Moreover, a large portion of these disparities occurs because of the lack of resources, funding, and socioeconomic opportunities that communities struggle to obtain.

For 1199SEIU members- the majority of whom are minorities- this is Act is just as equally as important to their job service as well as their personal lives. Not only would this Act better help to redirect healthcare resources that our members provide, but this Act would act as a safeguard to ensure that our members would still have access to receive adequate healthcare resources themselves, just as most non-minority communities.

Realistically, racism can run rampant and operates subtly if left unchecked- unfortunately, this has even led to racial bias in the application of healthcare. Now is the time for legislation like this to be enacted because during the COVID-19 pandemic or any other future pandemic, this Act takes necessary measures to ensures that healthcare quality is dispersed equally without racial or systematic bias. Now is the time to make sure that all Marylanders, particularly residents that are marginalized in Black and Brown communities are protected and are not treated unequally, especially when it comes to healthcare obtainment.

For this reason, we believe that this Act will create the necessary structure in place to improve overall health equity for historically marginalized Marylanders and ask that you support the Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021.

Respectfully,

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