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TO: The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair
Members, House Economic Matters Committee
The Honorable Pam Queen

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer

DATE: February 16, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 800 – *Public Safety – Emergency Management – Price Gouging Consumer Protections*

On behalf of the LifeSpan Network, the Maryland Association of Adult Day Services, and the Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association, we respectfully **support with amendment** House Bill 800. Among other provisions, House Bill 800 states that, during a State of Emergency, a person may not sell or offer to sell essential goods and services for a price of 10% or more above the highest price at which the person made actual sales or rentals of those essential goods or services between sixty days before the State of Emergency declaration and four days before the State of Emergency. The above-referenced organizations are particularly supportive of the inclusion of health staffing services as part of the definition of essential goods and services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during the latest omicron surge, health care providers relied more heavily on the use of health care staffing agencies to meet regulatory staffing requirements. This was in part because of employees testing positive for the virus or being subject to quarantine policies. In an informal survey, many nursing facilities reported paying up to 30% higher for nursing staffing agencies during the pandemic than they paid before the pandemic. It was unclear whether the increases in price actually increased the wages of those providing the services.

The above-referenced organizations do request one amendment, which would extend the prohibition for 90 days upon the conclusion of the State of Emergency declaration. On page 2, in line 11, insert “EMERGENCY, AND FOR THE 90 DAYS FOLLOWING THE END OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY, A PERSON ...”. With this amendment, we request the favorable vote on House Bill 800.

For more information call:

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