



**Testimony of Ricarra Jones, Political Director of 1199 SEIU on  
SB 899 Authority Over Staffing and Infrastructure Operations Act**

**Position: UNFAVORABLE**

February 22, 2022

Dear Chair Paul G. Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

1199SEIU Healthcare Workers East 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 oppose SB 899.**

SB 899 The Authority Over Staffing and Infrastructure Operations bill removes key decision-making autonomy from numerous specialized State health licensing boards to the detriment of those entities and the Maryland workers they serve, and negatively impacts funding for certain board operations.

Under current law, members of numerous State health licensing boards are granted the authority to appoint executive officers and make internal determinations on compensation for members. Members of these licensing boards address very specific areas of the healthcare industry and have the expertise and knowledge necessary to make important decisions about the membership and operation of their own boards.

SB 899 The Authority Over Staffing and Infrastructure Operations bill takes decision making autonomy away from on-the-ground subject matter experts and instead, requires health licensing boards to consult with entities such as the Governor and the Secretary of Health on important matters such as appointment of board executive officers, setting service terms for those executive officers, and setting compensation amounts for certain board employees.

Further, SB 899 The Authority Over Staffing and Infrastructure Operations bill would require staffing for health licensing boards to be in accordance with the State budget rather than the budget of those boards, and consultation with outside State entities is mandatory.

Not only will health licensing boards lose their current management autonomy under SB 899 The Authority Over Staffing and Infrastructure Operations, board will also lose access to funding for certain internal operations.

SB 899 The Authority Over Staffing and Infrastructure Operations would not allow funds currently managed by health licensing boards to be used to pay for “infrastructure operations”, which are defined as “administrative activities of a board or commission...including tools and resources for the use and support of deliberative actions”.

Maryland’s numerous specialized health licensing boards should not lose their current autonomy to act independently on staffing and membership matters, and should not lose access to funding for administrative activities which are necessary for boards to fulfill their statutory and regulatory duties. Maryland’s health licensing boards must continue to have the ability to manage internal operations using the best judgment of expert board members, without unnecessary pressure and interference from powerful state actors which may not appreciate important issues affecting different boards.

Further, it seems extremely likely that requiring involvement by entities such as the Governor and the Secretary of Health will lead to substantial delay in key areas of the operations of many, many health licensing boards. Delays in healthcare licensing will have a negative affect on many Marylanders.

For these reasons, we **OPPOSE SB 899** and ask for an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

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