



**Testimony - SB 518**  
**Career Pathways for Healthcare Workers Program**  
**Position: Favorable**

Good afternoon to the Chair and members of the committee. My name is Tonia Price and I am a Unit Secretary Clerical Specialist at University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center, where I have worked for ten years. I am writing this testimony to express my support in favor of SB 518, the Career Pathways for Healthcare Workers Program.

As a clerical specialist in a hospital unit, the work I do is very important. When the Covid-19 Pandemic began, my role evolved into something I never imagined. Because of the shortages of nurses, techs, and basically every direct care position on the floor, I was being asked to go to rooms, check in on patients, bring them water, check their fluids, provide formula - anything minor I could do to help out because there just weren't enough people to care for everyone. All of this while still managing the front desk and answering calls.

The pandemic and the worker shortages has made many of my coworkers feel like they wanted to get out of the medical profession due to the lack of PPE, lack of hazard pay, and the lack of what felt like a regard for the wellbeing of frontline workers.

If - no, when this legislation becomes law, it would change the paradigm of so many of my colleagues. They would feel like there is an opportunity for them to do more and become more. I've always thought about going back to school but then kids came, so I focused on them. I had no time to worry about where I was going to find the money to pay for a higher education.

Honestly, I feel this should have been done a long time ago. It should not have come to this point where because there are so many shortages, now the state can provide workers with opportunities. This career pathways program will lift the ceiling on the upward mobility of so many workers like myself, who have deferred our dreams of educational and career advancement due to the cost.

Degree programs at two and four year colleges are not cheap. To know that the hospital or healthcare facilities would place us directly into programs and allow us the time to get the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities we need to advance our careers is life changing. I want to thank this committee for this opportunity to share my point of view, and for providing this opportunity for workers to better ourselves by investing in us. Without the burden of cost, healthcare professionals and aspiring healthcare workers can now focus on our education and know our lives are about to change for the better. It is for this reason this legislation is so necessary, and I why I am in support of the passage of SB 518.

Respectfully,

Tonia Price  
Unit Secretary Clerical Specialist