



**Testimony of Ricarra Jones, Political Director of 1199SEIU on
HB 1035 Health Insurance – Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program
(Access to Care Act)**

Position: FAVORABLE

March 3, 2022

Dear Chairwoman Shane E. Pendergrass and Members of the Health and Government Operations 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 fully support HB 1035.**

HB 1035 Health Insurance – Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program (Access to Care Act) would allow certain noncitizen residents of Maryland to enroll in qualified health plans offered through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (the “Exchange”) regardless of their immigration status.

The Access to Care Act provides that “qualified residents” (which are defined as individuals and minors regardless of their immigration status) to enroll in qualified health plans through the Exchange provided they meet certain requirements.

Notably, the Access to Care Act would require funding for the establishment and operation of the Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program. The Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program would provide State premium assistance and cost-sharing reductions in order to make individual market health insurance coverage offered through the Exchange affordable to “qualified residents”.

Healthcare costs have only gone up in recent years and often are a tremendous burden on our most vulnerable residents. Individuals and families living in Maryland as noncitizens face even greater obstacles to obtaining important healthcare services and medical assistance.

Without this Bill, noncitizen residents continue to be barred from obtaining crucial health care services due to their immigration status, to the detriment of many individuals and families who live and work in our communities. Protecting these vulnerable residents should be a priority for Maryland.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT HB 1035** and ask for a **FAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

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