

## **Testimony in Support of SB 604**

### **Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aides - Reimbursement and Wages**

Dear Chair Griffith and members of the Finance committee:

My name is Nadirah and I live in Baltimore City. I have been a home care aid on and off for 30 years now. I love my job because I believe that care is what keeps this world afloat. Since I was twelve years old when I started watching my mom and ever since then I knew that caregiving is my calling.

I am here today because for too long home care workers have been invisible to the rest of society as we travel to people's homes ensuring they are able to do their daily tasks safely and with support. I am here today to fight for home care workers in the state but also for my patients who deserve consistent caregivers. Because of low pay, I have colleagues jumping between agencies or sometimes leaving the field entirely to earn more in another industry.

When home care workers are compensated justly, we have better morale. When I go home, I want to have enough to not only make ends meet and pay my bills but also the things that make me feel good like a membership to the YMCA, going out to lunch, or getting a massage. I want home care workers in Maryland to not only survive, but thrive.

I do this work because providing care is personal to me, but I am underpaid and burnt out trying to make ends meet for me and my family. I had a brain tumor and survived a stroke. I suffered paralysis and when I could not walk, talk, or barely eat, I relied on a friend to care for me. Will the legislature wait until you or your loved ones experiences a health decline to invest in our care infrastructure? And by then, will it be too late?

Caregivers are the backbone of this economy. It's long overdue for the state to invest in us, care workers, and ensure we are getting adequately paid. Because care can't wait, I urge you to issue a favorable report on SB 604.

Sincerely,

Wendy (Nadirah) Wiley

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