

## **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 Tonya. I have been a home care worker for 12 years in Maryland. I support SB 604 because it provides a needed investment in home care workers that can improve retention and recruitment to meet the needs of all the residents needing home care services.

Let me tell you about one of my clients, Linda. I worked with Linda for 8 years. Linda had a stroke and her whole left side was paralyzed. I would help her get up from bed, make her food, take her to doctor's appointments, advocate for her, and I treated her like family. Linda trusted me with her life and I was always the highlight of her day. She became part of my family. She passed away in 2021 and I had to take time off from work because of the grief I felt.

The client I have now, Anthony, has shuffled between home care workers because he is a bit difficult to work with. He became disabled 13 years ago after a horrible motorcycle accident that almost had him pronounced dead. But he survived. As I'm working with him, I feel like I'm helping him slowly put himself back together. I help him with his daily tasks and encourage him to believe in himself as he navigates his life.

My clients deserve all the care and attention in the world. But, I can't afford to stay in this field anymore. There are weeks where I am deciding between getting food for the week or gas and it's put me in a hard spot. I work 10-12 hour days and I take home \$1,800 every month. After I pay rent, car insurance, I barely have anything left for food, utility bills, and other needs.

It's just not fair. I'm almost ready to give it up but I don't want to give it up. I'm good at what I do and I have deep compassion for the people I work with.

SB 604 is an important step towards investing in Maryland's care workforce. I'm here to urge you to support SB 604 on behalf of clients like Linda and Anthony who need care workers and to help me keep the job that I love.

Sincerely,

Tonya Maynard

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