



Testimony on SB365/HB588  
Access to Care Act of 2023  
**Position: Favorable with Amendments<sup>1</sup>**

To Chair Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee; Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee,

My name is Lauren Reichard, I am a Registered Nurse in an Intensive Care Unit in Prince George's County, and a member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the country, with over 10,000 members in Maryland and Washington DC. Our union supports SB365 – Access to Care Act – and we urge the Committee to issue a **favorable** report. This legislation will ensure immigration status is not a barrier for Marylanders to accessing healthcare and will create a subsidy program so healthcare can be more affordable.

I support SB365 because no human being is illegal, and every human deserves to have access to healthcare, health, and wellness. We have seen incredible patient outcomes across the U.S. as states like Maryland have paved the way to expanding Medicaid coverages compared to states that have not expanded. And just as we have seen positive healthcare outcome changes among people who are currently eligible to an expanded version of Medicaid, I believe we will see even better outcomes when we provide further expanded Medicaid coverage to Marylanders, regardless of their immigration status.

I cared for a patient in the ICU who had been walking home from work in a restaurant when they were hit by a car moving at a high speed. The patient suffered multiple broken bones, spent an enormous amount of time in the ICU, and was going to need complex and lengthy rehabilitation to ever walk again. The patient was a day laborer working on Maryland's infrastructure. The patient also happened to have immigrated to the U.S. as a young adult to seek refuge, find better opportunities, and pursue the coveted American dream. This plan was seemingly cut short. I went to the patient's room one shift where the patient and their family at the bedside appeared worried, anxious, and distressed. I had assumed the worry and anxiety were regarding the patient's injuries, as the physicians had determined that day that the patient was not going to be able to walk as soon as they had hoped. No. The patient and their family were distraught about costs and whether they would be able to send the patient to a rehabilitation facility, as they had no health insurance due to immigration status. The sheer distress on everyone's face in the room was human, not illegal or ineligible. Our workforce will be stronger, our vulnerable will be cared for, and Maryland will be healthier when Medicaid is expanded regardless of immigration status.

Please vote **YES** on this life saving legislation to expand access to Medicaid to all Marylanders regardless of immigration status and to establish a subsidy program so newly covered patients can afford healthcare.

In Unity,  
Lauren Reichard, RN  
lereichard@gmail.com

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<sup>1</sup> **Proposed Amendment:** Section V - add a number A (5): "That provides State premium assistance and cost-sharing reduction subsidies for Qualified Residents that seek to attain the same level of health plan affordability and limit on out-of-pocket costs experienced by all other health plan purchasers on the exchange."