



David J. Rodwin, Attorney
Public Justice Center
201 North Charles Street, Suite 1200
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-625-9409, ext. 249
rodwind@publicjustice.org

HB 490: Residential Service Agencies – Employee Registry

Hearing of the House Health and Government Operations Committee, February 23, 2023

Position: Favorable

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Workplace Justice Project works to expand and enforce the right of low-wage workers to receive an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. The PJC **supports HB 490**, which would help address the lack of data and transparency in Maryland's home care workforce.

Maryland faces a home care workforce crisis.

- Home care workers provide services and supports to older adults and people with disabilities. Their work helps Marylanders stay independent in their homes and communities, rather than nursing homes.
- Demand for home care is increasing as Maryland becomes an older state and more people with disabilities receive care in their homes rather than nursing homes.
- A 2018 [study](#) found that Maryland will need 40 percent more care workers over the next ten years.¹

Despite the workforce crisis, the importance of the work, and the fact that most of the work is funded by Medicaid, we lack adequate data and transparency about Maryland's home care workers.

- Most home care provided in Maryland is funded by Medicaid with a mix of state and federal money – but both policymakers and the public lack data and transparency about the workforce.
- It is very difficult for *consumers* to learn what trainings workers have completed and what licenses they have. This leaves consumers in the dark about the qualifications of the care workers they depend on to provide extraordinarily important and intimate work.
- The lack of a central repository of basic data *also* makes it difficult for policymakers to understand the size and nature of the workforce – even as we face a worsening workforce crisis.

HB 490 is a simple, common-sense way to improve data and transparency for Maryland home care.

- HB 490 will create a registry with basic information about Maryland's home care workforce.
- The sponsor amendments make clear that this registry would be available to the public, making it a modest but important step toward addressing the lack of data and transparency in Maryland home care.

For the foregoing reasons, the PJC **SUPPORTS HB 490** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report. The PJC supports the sponsor amendments. Should you have any questions, please call David Rodwin at 410-625-9409 ext. 249.

¹ PHI, *The Direct Services Workforce in Long-Term Services and Supports in Maryland and the District of Columbia*, 2018, available at <http://phinational.org/resource/the-direct-services-workforce-in-ltss-in-md-and-dc/>.

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