

**ROBBYN LEWIS**  
*Legislative District 46*  
Baltimore City



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 424  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3772 · 301-858-3772  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3772  
Robbyn.Lewis@house.state.md.us

Health and Government Operations  
Committee

*Subcommittees*

Health Occupations and Long Term Care

Public Health and Minority  
Health Disparities

*House Chair*

Joint Committee on Program Open Space  
and Agricultural Land Preservation

**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

## **Testimony in Support of HB490 - Residential Service Agencies - Employee Registry**

February 21, 2023

Thank you Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and members of the Health & Government Operations Committee, I am Delegate Robbyn Lewis testifying on behalf of HB490, which establishes a homecare worker registry in the Maryland Department of Health. This is a good governance and healthcare workforce planning bill, and I hope you will support it.

It is notable that Maryland has the 3<sup>rd</sup> longest waitlist on the Medicaid Waiver for Home and Community Based Services with over 30,000 individuals waiting for home care services.

This highlights the rising need for home care services in the state. However, Maryland is facing a **care gap**: we have a projected need for 40% more homecare workers by 2024. Maryland has a significant shortage of home care workers. If current trends continue, this shortage is likely to grow in coming years as our state's population continues to age. Maryland's aging population is projected to grow by 30% by 2030.

In order to address this care gap, the home care registry will help the state collect vital workforce data to inform our state agencies and policy makers, who can use the data to address the specific needs of this workforce and those who procure their services.

HB490 requires all residential service agencies to provide name, address, title, and training and certification of all individuals who work for the agency. Agencies will submit this information and update it quarterly.

Overall, the 310 Medicaid-enrolled Residential Service Agencies (RSAs) reported employing a total of 7,208 personal care assistants (PCAs), of which 5,625 are employees and 1,583 are independent contractors

During the pandemic, our former governor had issued several guidance documents and benefits for essential health care workers such as a childcare benefit and ensuring all healthcare workers had PPE. However, home care aides were generally left out and neglected. Will we continue to leave our home care workers behind?

Those who need home care services are continuing to have more diverse needs such as challenges related to Dementia, Alzheimer's, Developmental Disabilities, or Behavioral health. The registry will help the state bolster workforce development opportunities and ensure workers are receiving the training that meets patients' needs.

Maryland can be at the forefront of supporting the home care workforce so that families across the state can rest better knowing their loved ones are in good hands. Establishing a home care worker registry is one important step towards addressing the care gap and building a strong care infrastructure in Maryland. For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB490.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Lewis", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Robbyn Lewis  
District 46, Baltimore City  
Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen St. Room 424  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
(o) 410-841-3772