



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 Antonia Brooks I am a Physical Medicine Rehabilitation Technician in the ICU Level II at a hospital in Baltimore City, and I'm 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 an amendment to create a subsidy program. 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 for newly insured Marylanders.

Patients without health insurance often delay seeking healthcare because they can't afford it. The consequence of this is that patients' health gets worse overtime and the medical bills get higher. For example, if a patient has a heart condition but puts off primary care, they will end up in the hospital and have to get surgery. We have a short staffing crisis in our hospitals. The current patient to worker ratio is unsustainable. Healthcare workers are overworked and underpaid. We need safe staffing and higher wages.

Expanding access to affordable health insurance for everyone will help patients get primary care so they do not end up in the hospital. This is better for the patients health, and reduces the burden on healthcare workers in short staffed hospitals. We always provide the best healthcare we can, but it is unfair for patients to have to go to the hospital because they could not afford primary care.

I am a healthcare worker because I care about people, and I believe access to healthcare is a human right. It should not matter where someone was born. Everyone deserves affordable healthcare. Please vote yes on the Access to Care Act. Thank you

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,  
Antonia Brooks, annlize74@hotmail.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."

