

SB230: Homecare Registry Testimony, 2/23/23 (Jeneva Stone)

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and members of the HGO Committee:

My name is Jeneva Stone. I am an author, advocate, and mother. I am also a member of the Taskforce to study the Healthcare Workforce Crisis. I serve on the Workforce Data subgroup. My son Rob Stone, artist and advocate, has disabilities and complex medical needs. He lives at home with the support of Medicaid waivers—he does not want to live in a facility.

As a health care consumer and advocate, a Homecare Registry appeals to me. I know there's a staffing crisis because we can't get subs for my son's home nurses through his RSA, and it's been difficult to find home care aides. But beyond that, I really don't know anything at all. Families like mine are simply left in the dark and we're becoming increasingly distraught. How will our loved ones stay in the community? How can our families function?

My dad worked for IBM. From him, I learned that lists and data are the cornerstone to getting anything done. From my service on the Workforce Data subgroup, I know for a fact that there's just no good data on home care at all. And my personal experience over the last two decades has led me to believe that home care has always been an afterthought in Maryland. It's time that changed.

With a homecare registry, the state would have data reports on workforce development, training needs, retention rates, and our ability to support our growing need for home care services. I want to know how many workers we have and what their training and qualifications are. I understand that this iteration of the registry may not be consumer-friendly, but it is the first step in gathering transparent data about our home care workforce.

For people with disabilities like Rob, life in the community is a civil right. I urge committee members to issue a favorable report on HB490 to invest in and strengthen our care infrastructure with state oversight and data. I support sponsor amendments. It's time Maryland got serious about home care.