

## Testimony for HB 490

### Residential Service Agencies - Employee Registry

#### Position: FAVORABLE

To Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of the House Health Government Operations Committee:

My name is Jennifer Gibson. I live in Charles County and I have been a home care worker for 15 years serving clients in Baltimore and Montgomery County. I enjoy the work I do because I am passionate about caring for others. I was privileged to have loving elders that taught me to care for others. However, home care workers need more support and protection. I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 490 which is the first step the state must take to provide adequate oversight to

Because of low pay and poor benefits, many of my colleagues leave the field for a more stable, less stressful jobs. Thousands of Marylanders are relying on home care services, but we have no plan in place to ensure we are retaining workers and ensuring they have the training they need to adequately take care of patients.

Aiding and assisting someone in their most vulnerable state is important work. If the state valued this work, we would not be struggling the way that we are. Currently, I have been assigned a patient with Alzheimer's disease and my agency has not given me the training to care for people with dementia or Alzheimer's. I personally do not feel comfortable providing care without that training. I was informed that last year the General Assembly passed legislation to require dementia training for direct care workers, but I was not aware of this. I wonder what other information I am missing because the State has failed to let home care workers know about training opportunities and updates.

During the pandemic, CNAs were getting information from the state about being essential health care workers and were offered child care benefits and PPE. Home care workers are on the front lines providing care in people's homes, **but we were completely neglected**. I was taking care of my older father and I was worried that I would spread COVID-19 to him.

We need legislators, policy makers, and data analysts to pay attention to the home care workforce. I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 490.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Gibson

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