



Testimony on SB328
The Nursing Home Staffing Crisis Act of 2024
Position: **FAV**

Chair Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee,

My name is Teneia Wells, I am a Geriatric Nursing Assistant (GNA) at a Long Term Care facility in Baltimore County, and a member of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. I've been a GNA since 2001. I urge you to issue a favorable report on SB328: The Nursing Home Staffing Crisis Funding Act of 2024 to raise wages for Long Term Care workers.

I work the night shift, 11pm-7am. Our GNA to patient ratio is 1:22. Overnight we have 12+ residents that need Dialysis treatment. When residents need to be moved out of bed, we need two GNAs to move them safely. With short staffing, that means residents are laying in bed for too long waiting for two GNAs to be available at the same time, which causes bedsores and other health issues. In addition to moving residents from bed to dialysis, we are also responsible for linen changes and colonoscopy bag changes.

In order to do the daily living activities that improve quality of life for our residents like we used to do before the short staffing crisis (for example: socializing with residents), we would need twice as many GNAs. I've been caring for many of my residents for over a decade. They are like family to me. It is heartbreaking to see their quality of life decline because of short staffing.

We all want to be able to go the extra mile for our residents but management is underpaying workers, keeping us constantly short staffed. I've had several coworkers quit because of the low pay. They took jobs at Amazon and WalMart where the pay is comparable because working at those places is less stressful than constantly working short staffed in healthcare.

Raising our wages is the solution to the short staffing crisis because it will retain the workers we already have, and recruit a new generation of healthcare workers to join us. Making a living wage would help me better support my family and my health. One thing I would love to do if I got a wage increase, but can't afford right now, is be able to get massages because of all the physical stress being a GNA puts on my body.

The short staffing crisis in Long Term Care impacts EVERYONE because you never know who will be laying in that bed someday. It could be me, it could be you, it could be a loved one. Being "able bodied" is temporary and we ALL need healthcare. Please vote YES on SB328. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Teneia Wells