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**SB 371 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aides – Reimbursement and Wage Reports  
(Homecare Workers Employment Act of 2024)  
Senate Finance Committee  
FAVORABLE  
February 6, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Beidel and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy AARP Maryland is a proud member of the Caring Across Maryland coalition supporting a package of bills to bolster quality of care in long term care settings. On behalf of our more than 850,000 members, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 371 the Maryland Medical Assistance Program-Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aids-Reimbursement. We thank Senator Lam for sponsoring this important piece of legislation.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people aged 50-Plus, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families, such as health care, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities, and protection from financial abuse.

The Homecare Worker Employment Act of 2024 will address the shortage of basic data on Maryland's home care workforce by requiring reporting of certain Medicaid-funded home care workers' wage rates and lay the groundwork to solve the workforce crisis by increasing workers' wages. A similar bill filed in 2023 passed the House unanimously but did not get a vote in the Senate.

SB 371 The Homecare Worker Employment Act of 2024 will address the shortage of basic data on Maryland's home care workforce by requiring reporting of certain Medicaid-funded home care workers' wage rates and lay the groundwork to solve the workforce crisis by increasing workers' wages. In 2023 A similar bill, HB 318 passed the House unanimously but did not get a vote in the Senate. We thank Senator Lam for introducing this bill.

Maryland lacks data on home care workers' pay rates—information policymakers need to understand and address the home care workforce crisis.

- Consumers and employers report home care workforce shortages and high turnover. But although most of the workforce is funded by Medicaid, there is no hard data on workers' pay rates. As a result, policymakers lack the data they need to improve home care jobs and solve the workforce crisis.

- This bill solves this problem by requiring that home care agencies that receive Medicaid reimbursement

The bill requires a report to the Maryland Department of Labor the average, highest, and lowest pay rates they pay home care workers. With this information, Maryland can take action to ensure that workers receive competitive wages, helping attract and retain the workforce Maryland needs.

Maryland needs consistent, up-to-date Medicaid reimbursement rate studies to ensure that our state's Medicaid reimbursement rates allow for direct care workers to be paid competitive wages.

- Maryland last did a Medicaid reimbursement rate study for home- and community-based services in 2018. Needless to say, Maryland has changed a lot since. As a result, both policymakers and the Maryland Department of Health lack the information they need to ensure that reimbursement rates are adequate to allow providers to pay competitive wages.
- The Homecare Worker Employment Act of 2024 would solve this problem by requiring rate studies every two years, with reports to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee. The rate study will involve interviews with key stakeholders, including providers, and will also examine the cost of ensuring that workers are paid at least 50% more than minimum wage (i.e., \$22.50/hour).

For these reasons, we ask the Committee for a favorable report on SB 371. If you have questions or comments, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or by calling 410-302-8451.