



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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## **SB 371 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Provider Agencies and Personal Care Aides - Reimbursement and Wage Reports (Homecare Workers Livable Wage Act of 2024)**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**February 5, 2024**

### **SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards**

**President**

**Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 371. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 300,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

Maryland's labor movement supports this bill as it provides a clear path towards addressing how underpaid our state's personal care aides are. In order to fully understand a problem in an industry as complicated as personal care, we need accurate information about the state of the industry. SB 371 asks for an essential list of documentation from personal care providers to better understand wage rates and the actual costs of services. The bill requires the Maryland Department of Labor to use this information to calculate adjustments to the Medicaid reimbursement rate necessary to fund personal care aide wages to at least 150% of the state's minimum wage.

This bill enacts many of the recommendations of the state's Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis report. The report found that, "Population projections for Maryland estimate that the number of residents 65 and older will increase 33% from 2020 to 2030. Coupled with the slow recovery of Maryland's healthcare workforce, the need for healthcare for this population, including increased demand for opportunities to age in place on the current workforce." Based on their findings, the Commission recommended far stronger healthcare workforce data collection and the creation of a Task Force to Study Home Health Care Workforce Shortages.

We urge a favorable report for SB 371.