

Testimony in support of

HB 39

Home Care Workers Rights Act of 2024

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

My name is Vivian Boone and I am a home care worker in Baltimore City. As someone with over 35 years of experience caring for the state's most vulnerable and being underpaid as a misclassified worker, I support HB 39 to ensure the end of illegal misclassification of home care workers. Home care workers need more support and protection.

Home care worker misclassification means that instead of being employees with full entitlement of a minimum wage and protections, we are classified as independent contractors. Many of us do not even know that we are misclassified until we start sharing our experiences of not getting paid overtime or for the time we spend commuting between homes. Because of low pay and poor benefits, many of my colleagues leave the field for more stable, less stressful jobs. By preventing worker misclassification, this legislation would reduce turnover and improve the quality of care.

I work hard for my money, but I am not getting what I work for. It hurts me, my family, my home. I work to pay my bills but when my agency misclassifies me. I work weekly to pay for my monthly bills and I still can't meet it. It's hard to make ends meet when we are not compensated justly.

This is a widespread issue, and it needs to be prevented. The state's public dollars are being used by agencies who are breaking the law and undercutting their staff.

Our governor, Wes Moore, said that no one will get left behind. Home care workers continue to be left behind because of lack of state oversight. We call on this committee and the Department of Health to stand with home care workers. I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 39.

Sincerely,

Vivian Boone