



Testimony for HB 1194  
**Safe Staffing Act of 2024**  
*Before the Senate Finance Committee*  
March 14<sup>th</sup>  
Position: **FAV**

Dear Chair Peña Melnyk and members of the Committee:

My name is Johnine Gunsalus and I have been a nurse for 35 years in New York. As a healthcare worker who is part of a clinical staffing committee, I am testifying in support of HB 1194. In 2021, New York passed the Safe Staffing Committees legislation and since then, healthcare workers have been key voices in tangible and effective solutions to staffing issues in the hospital.

Before this legislation, I was like many of the healthcare workers in Maryland and in the nation working understaffed, burnt out, disappointed by the inadequate care patients were receiving due to hospital management decisions on staffing., and left out of the discussions to address the healthcare workforce crisis. HB 1194 gives workers a transparent process to come up with strategies and solutions named by workers who know the issue personally.

Our clinical staffing committee meets monthly to report back on staffing conditions, complaints, issues, and work together to find solutions. It's not just about staffing ratios, but also about addressing issues that certain positions might have due to their assignments and unit protocols. The staffing committees holds all stakeholders accountable to making meaningful changes that truly improve the care we deliver.

This legislation will foster true collaboration between hospital management and healthcare workers. I feel more empowered and happier in my position by being a part of the staffing committee because I know that my perspective is considered to help create better jobs for co-workers and better care for my patients.

With Maryland's all-payer model, it is poised perfectly to adopt The Safe Staffing Act of 2024 and connect staffing to quality of care. I urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1194. I am happy to answer any questions you might have at [johnine.gunsalus@1199delegate.org](mailto:johnine.gunsalus@1199delegate.org).

Sincerely,

Johnine Gunsalus

1199 SEIU Delegate

Buffalo, New York