



**Testimony of American Association of University Women of Maryland**

**to the**

**Maryland General Assembly  
Senate Finance Committee**

**in support of**

**Senate Bill 720: Clinical Staffing Committees and Plans – Establishment  
(The Safe Staffing Act of 2025)**

February 28, 2025

Submitted by Roxann King, co-Vice President, Public Policy, AAUW Maryland  
2535 Painter Court, Annapolis, MD 21401

The American Association of University Women Maryland (AAUW Maryland) strongly supports 2025 SB 720. Founded in 1881, AAUW's approximately 170,000 members and 1,000 branches nationwide are leaders in gender equity research, advocacy, and education. In Maryland, our members and supporters, and college and university partners are strong advocates for laws that promote the well-being of women and families.

We are concerned with SB 720 because it relates to emergency room wait time. We supported that bill in 2023 and so far, see nothing happening. Maryland continues to be ranked worst in the nation for the ninth consecutive year, for emergency room wait times, despite a hospital supervised committee being appointed to study this problem by the 2023 Maryland General Assembly. This is also despite several Maryland hospitals being rated among the best in the nation this year. This issue is important to many of our members, who are definitely aging and using hospitals more.

The committee on staffing found two main culprits that were responsible for the emergency room delays: under staffing and too few beds. This bill addresses hospital understaffing. In my testimony in 2023, I related how my friend Cheryl Menke went to the Anne Arundel Medical Center emergency room at her doctor's direction for a pint of blood. Three days in a row she was told there was an eight hour wait. The third day she arrived at 8 p.m., stayed, and was seen finally at 5 a.m. the next morning. By the time she was seen, she had three pulmonary embolisms, needed three pints of blood, and was hospitalized for a week.

Another AAUW friend new to the area, Susan Crawford, related to me an October 2023 incident involving her husband Jay nearly cutting off a finger while using a table saw. The nearest hospital was University of Maryland Baltimore-Washington Medical Center, where they arrived at 3 p.m. on a Saturday. Around five o'clock they asked if someone would look at his finger, because it was bleeding a lot and they did not want to lose it. They were offered more paper towels. They were taken to a room and sat for another hour. Someone came in, looked at it and took pictures. At around 8:30, the night doctor came in and offered to cut it off. No orthopedics doctor was available and no ambulance was available for transfer to MedStar in Baltimore. At 9:30, ambulance transport was still unavailable. Shortly after deciding he would have to spend the night, at 10:30 they finally agreed that the couple could drive themselves to MedStar. Paperwork was sent and by 11:30 an orthopedics hand surgeon at MedStar was taking care of the hand. Later, at CVS for a vaccine, the nurse administering the vaccine related to Susan that she had quit working in the emergency room at BWMC because of the stress from understaffing.

This problem is fixable. Virginia does so much better than Maryland with similar resources. Please fix it. Demand accountability for safe staffing by Maryland's highly rated hospitals.

**AAUW MD urges that you provide a favorable report on Senate Bill 720, Clinical Staffing and Committees – Establishment (The Safe Staffing Act of 2025).**