

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill (SB) 720: Safe Staffing Act of 2025 by Dr. William Reid
Finance Committee
Position: Support
March 4, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and Finance Committee members. My name is William Reid, and I reside in Frederick, Maryland. I serve as an Executive Board Member of the Rural Maryland Council, a leader and board member of Progressive Maryland, and the Chair of Frederick Progressives. Today, I provide written testimony to **support SB 720 (The Safe Staffing Act of 2025)**, requiring Maryland hospitals to establish clinical staffing committees and implement staffing plans to ensure safe and effective patient care.

SB 720 addresses chronic short-staffing issues in many Maryland hospitals, particularly emergency rooms and critical care departments. By creating staffing committees comprising 50% direct care workers and knowledgeable medical staff, SB 720 ensures that those on the frontlines have a voice in setting safe and effective staffing levels. Each committee will develop a clinical staffing plan tailored to the hospital's patient population, including clear guidelines on how many patients should be assigned per nurse and the appropriate number of support staff per shift. To maintain hospital accountability, they must review and update their staffing plans annually, evaluating their effectiveness and making necessary improvements. Additionally, these plans will be posted on hospital websites, increasing transparency for healthcare consumers and holding institutions accountable for safe staffing levels. SB 720 also ensures that staffing plans consider patient acuity levels, discharge and admission rates, and healthcare providers' necessary skills and experience, all critical factors in delivering high-quality care. Furthermore, hospitals must establish a process for receiving and addressing complaints related to staffing concerns, ensuring continuous improvement and patient safety.

SB 720 is essential for protecting both patients and healthcare workers. Overburdened staff cannot provide the level of care patients deserve, and understaffing leads to burnout, higher turnover rates, and worse health outcomes. The Safe Staffing Act of 2025 is necessary to ensure that Maryland hospitals remain places of healing, not harm. I urge you to **support SB720** and take decisive action to protect Maryland's patients and frontline healthcare workers. Let's build a healthcare system prioritizing safety, transparency, and accountability.