



Testimony for SB 938
Fraud Prevention and Worker Protections - Prohibitions, Penalties, and Enforcement
Before the Senate Finance Committee

March 5, 2025

Position: FAV

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation – representing 10,000 healthcare workers in long-term care facilities and hospitals across Maryland. 1199 SEIU worked with Caring Across Maryland coalition to pass SB197 during the 2024 legislative session which prevents misclassification of home care workers employed by residential services agencies.

1199 SEIU supports SB 938 because it strengthens worker protections against workplace fraud through the establishment of the Workplace Fraud Unit in the Attorney General's Office and enables legal enforcement and penalties against employers who violate Maryland Wage and Hour Law, the Maryland Wage Payment and Collection Law, workplace fraud laws, living wage laws, and prevailing wage laws.

SB 938 would protect home care workers and other direct care workers, who are often misclassified by their residential service agency who employs them. Many of our members interact with home care aides who help some residents in the facilities. There are also DDA funded home care workers and private home care workers that would benefit from SB 938. Despite the increasing demand and essential nature of home care, the caregiving work of personal care aides is still not valued- workers receive extremely low pay, few benefits and enjoy limited protections. Home care workers are still earning as low as \$15 per hour with very little job security. In Maryland, there are approximately 51,200 direct care workers, the majority of whom are Black and women of color. Home care workers are an important part of the patient care team. Often, home care workers have no idea they are being cut out of the social safety net that employees receive and are struggling to pay bills and keep a roof over their heads.

1199 SEIU represents healthcare workers across the care continuum – long term care, hospitals, and clinics – and we know how our broken long term care infrastructure impacts our state's unique Total Cost of Care healthcare model and our already burdened emergency rooms. Ensuring we have the care force in Maryland to let residents age safely in their homes will positively impact the entire care system. Preventing workplace fraud for private employees like

the ones mentioned can pave the way for a stronger care system. For those reasons, we urge the committee to issue a favorable report SB 938.

Sincerely,
Ricarra Jones
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