



Testimony to the House Health & Government Operations Committee
HB905 Safe Staffing Act
Position: Favorable

February 21, 2024

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Health & Government Operations Committee
Room 241, HOB
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Health & Government Operations Committee

Honorable Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights and equity for Maryland families through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

We are here in strong support of HB905 the Safe Staffing Act. Maryland hospitals face the most critical staffing shortage in recent history due to high staff turnover, shifting care delivery models, and poor working conditions for low pay.

Chronic stress is one of the main drivers of high turnover. Chronic stress experienced by nursing staff also leads to poor patient outcomes, long wait times, and the potential need for additional tests or interventions due to short-staffing and stress. As a result, patients may have higher healthcare bills and more medical debt. The current model harms healthcare workers and patients.

HB905 addresses these issues by requiring Maryland hospitals to create staffing committees comprised of 50% direct care workers that represent the entire care team. This will allow patients and management to collaborate. Research has shown that these sorts of joint staffing committees have led to less turnover and better patient outcomes. Nine other states have similar staffing committees and Maryland should embrace this critical effort and do the same.

For all these reasons, we support HB905 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive Director

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