



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

Affiliated with the National AFL-CIO

Donna S. Edwards
President

Samuel Epps, IV
Secretary-Treasurer

📞 410.280.2233

📠 410.280.2956

📍 7 School Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-2096

SB 663 - Nursing Homes - Direct Care Wages and Benefits and Cost Reports

Senate Finance Committee

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SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 663. On behalf of our 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

SB 663 builds on the work the General Assembly began last year with SB 697, requiring the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to assess nursing home spending so the State could get a clear picture of how Medicaid and Medicare dollars are being spent. This legislation simply pairs transparency with accountability, establishing an enforceable requirement that 75% of total nursing and residential care revenue be used for direct care wages and benefits.

Staffing and wages are innately connected. When wages are low, experienced staff are lost, there is constant turnover, and dangerously understaffed shifts which result in declining quality of care. SB 663 directly addresses this by ensuring that facility revenue is invested back into the people who keep them running everyday.

This legislation also requires nursing homes to submit an annual cost report documenting their wage disbursement. With this, the State can verify compliance and that public dollars are going where they are intended to be. SB 663 holds nursing homes accountable and supports residents and our workforce.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on SB 663.



unions@mddclabor.org



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