



Testimony for SB 555

Health - Dementia Services and Brain Health Program and Clinical Toolkit

Position: FAVORABLE

My name is Ricarra Jones and I am the Political Director for 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, Maryland/DC. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation, representing 10,000 members in our region. Our union supports SB555 and urges the Committee to issue a **favorable** report.

Passing this legislation is essential to equip healthcare providers with the tools needed for early detection, diagnosis, and care planning for dementia patients. 1199SEIU's direct care workers know that dementia patients are some of Maryland's most vulnerable patients in long term care facilities. Our broken care infrastructure, short-staffed hospitals, and nursing homes are a risk for aging patients, those with memory loss, and the workers who serve them.

Because dementia is one of Maryland's fastest growing public health challenges, implementing a statewide program focused on upstream prevention can help reduce hospitalizations, prevent unnecessary long-term care placements, and reduce future Medicaid and health care spending.

This legislation is supported by the Caring Across Maryland coalition, which consists of direct care workers, family caregivers, and twelve advocacy organizations fighting to improve long term care in Maryland. Because care can't wait, we urge a favorable report on SB 555.

Sincerely,

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Political Director | 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East