



February 12, 2021

Chair Williams, vice-chairs Ruiz and Leif, members of the committee, my name is Kyndall Mason, I am a policy strategist with SEIU Local 503. I submit this testimony regarding HB 2595, and to highlight the workforce crisis we have been experiencing in long term care. For the last several years this topic has been coming up from both a human services perspective and a workforce perspective. Now, with COVID-19 exposing all the cracks and gaps in the system it is more important than ever to work to solve our workforce crisis at all intersections of long-term care.

The long-term care workforce providing direct care, which is predominantly women, has been in crisis for years. Case managers, dealing with coordination of services have been underwater with case load, making a never-ending cycle where clients, care providers and case managers end up frustrated and exhausted. People on all sides of this issue, workers, consumers, advocates, watchdog groups and providers themselves come to you all regularly begging for solutions to this crisis.

HB 2595 will require an updated workforce analysis to coincide with our two-year budget cycle. It is not a silver bullet but having an updated workload model to set a true budget with will be crucial to closing the gaps. If case managers are simply unable to manage their mounting case load, then how can we expect clients and care providers to be receiving the supports and coordination case managers are there for in the first place?

Understanding workloads will make the budget setting process more productive and efficient. It is impossible to invest appropriately when you do not understand how much it costs to simply run a program. CSLs have been cuts budgets for the last several sessions and we are seeing the result of those cuts in our communities around the state. It is time to incorporate tools that can help us build a state budget that addresses needs while operating efficiently.

In conclusion, SEIU Local 503 supports HB 2595, because we understand that when case managers are able to do their jobs clients and workers are able to have better quality outcomes in their life and profession.

Sincerely,

Kyndall Mason
SEIU Local 503
Policy Strategist