



## Testimony in Support of SB 537 / HB 2552

Janet Morgan, SEIU Local 49

Patient Safety Attendant, Legacy Emanuel

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Janet Haynes, and I am a proud member of SEIU Local 49. I work as a Patient Safety Attendant (PSA) at Legacy Emanuel, where I have dedicated the past three years to ensuring the well-being of patients. My career in caregiving began at a young age, and I have always loved working in roles where I can help people.

I am here today to urge your support for SB 537, critical legislation that will make healthcare safer for both patients and providers. This bill addresses the growing crisis of workplace violence in healthcare by defining workplace violence in statute, improving prevention measures in hospitals, home health, and hospice, and ensuring stronger support for workers affected by violence.

### Why This Bill Matters

SB 537 will

**Define workplace violence** in statute, ensuring clarity in reporting and enforcement.

**Prevent violence in hospitals** by implementing common-sense safety measures, such as de-escalation training, first-name-only badges, behavioral health patient flags to improve safety, union representation on safety committees, and annual reviews of safety plans.

**Improve safety in home health and hospice** by requiring risk assessments during intake, providing panic buttons and security escorts when needed, and allowing workers to chart outside of the home when necessary.

**Support victims of workplace violence** with post-incident interviews, trauma counseling, first aid, and wage compensation for workers whose shifts are disrupted due to an incident.

**Increase transparency** through improved reporting to inform policymakers and assess progress.

### My Experience on the Front Lines

As a PSA, I:

- ◆ Provide direct observation and supervision for patients at risk of harming themselves or others.
- ◆ Monitor patients, assist with daily living activities, and ensure a safe environment.
- ◆ Communicate patient status changes to the medical team.

Like many caregivers, I work 12-hour shifts with patients who may exhibit violent behaviors. I have been kicked, threatened, chased out of rooms, and even had arms wrapped around my neck. Prior to this role, I worked as a transporter. I was often unaware of patient risks—until one day, I was kicked in the sternum so hard I required medical attention. I still deal with lingering neck issues from that incident.

We enter this work because we care about people, even those who are struggling. But caregivers—especially those in some of the lowest-paid roles in hospitals—deserve better protections. We need the tools and training to prevent violence, the transparency to understand risks, and the support to recover when incidents occur.

Passing SB 537 / HB 2552 will ensure that **everyone** in healthcare—doctors, nurses, food service workers, housekeepers, and patient safety attendants like me—can do our jobs without fear.

Thank you for your time, and I urge you to support this important bill.