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SEIU District 1199 New England
Before the Public Health Committee

*In Support of SB 1030 AN ACT CONCERNING LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES
with changes.*

Good afternoon Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Ida Robertson and I am a CNA at West River Healthcare Center in Milford. I am here today to testify in support of the staffing ratios language in Senate Bill 1030. I love my job because I'm always learning and I really care about my residents. I provide personal emotional support to my residents who are so far away from their family members. The care I give to long and short term residents is very important because without it they could die.

The type of care that is required now has changed dramatically in the last decade. In the past, residents were mostly elderly. Residents had issues like dementia, skin breakdowns, aging bones and the inability to do the daily tasks that would allow them to live on their own. Today, the population that we care for are much younger and face many different issues than the older population. The issues they face range from drug abuse, alcoholism, and mental illness. They are more aggressive, combative and violent. They have greater physical abilities and are dealing with the emotional ups and downs of addiction, while still living in a community meant for the elderly. The days of caring for the little old ladies and gentlemen has passed.

This bill is so important to pass because we need better staffing ratios to make sure that all the residents we care for, old or young, can live the best life they can. The only thing holding us back is the lack of resources. Without proper staffing levels, we are left to deal with changes in the level of care that we provide on our own. More staff would allow me more time for individual attention that would help curb the erratic and sometimes violent behaviors that are so common now. More staff would ensure that we can keep the safe space of our community for all individuals.

Staffing itself is vital to the safety and the wellbeing of the residents at any nursing home. Every day I struggle to make sure that I can get everything done while also trying to provide the individual attention that makes a difference in the lives of these residents. We are proud of our work and the life that we help our residents to live, but let's be serious, with enough resources we could truly make a difference in the lives of those we care for.

These days, myself and other staff are working twice as hard, while dealing with COVID. Passing this bill would be a step in the right direction for workers like me because it would help to provide better care for residents and families. The time is now to make changes that will ensure better, healthier outcomes. Please pass Senate Bill 1030. Thank you for your time.