

February 28, 2023

Sen. Sandra L. Pappas
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2113
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Esther Agbaje
437 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Sen. Pappas and Rep. Agbaje:

As unions that represent nursing home workers across the state, we write to support HF908/SF1621 which would create a Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board. The nursing home sector faces a workforce crisis that long pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis will not be solved unless we provide for a broad-based increase in basic wages and benefits. This can only happen if we give workers a seat at the table and the ability to help set minimum standards for their industry. We think this crisis is caused in part by the lack of adequate opportunities for workers to have a say in setting industry workforce standards. Simply adding new money to the current system won't produce the systemic changes we need to fix the problem.

Policy experts on both side of the political spectrum, from the progressive Center from American Progress^[1] to the conservative American Compass^[2] have called on legislators to provide new ways for workers to have a collective voice in their industry outside of the narrow limits of federal labor law. Last fall, the Minnesota AFL-CIO adopted a convention resolution in support of Labor Standards Boards. This bill gives Minnesota the chance to help lead a national drive to give more workers a greater voice over their standards of work.

Thank you,

AFSCME Council 65
SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa
UFCW Local 663
UFCW Local 1189
USW District 11

^[1] <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/worker-boards-across-the-country-are-empowering-workers-and-implementing-workforce-standards-across-industries/>

^[2] <https://americancompass.org/conservatives-should-ensure-workers-a-seat-at-the-table/>