

6668

*Gloria White, Personal Care Assistant
Human Services Committee*

Bill 6668

My name is Gloria White. I'm a CNA and a personal care assistant because I love caring for people. I cared for my grandmother from the beginning to the end. When she needed to be in the nursing home, I took a job there to make sure she wasn't alone.

I'm a PCA for a woman who was paralyzed after a car accident. When I first started working with her other PCAs told me I wouldn't want to, they said she needed total assistance and had already been through 10 other PCAs before me. It *was* a lot of work, but I was up for it and took the job. It meant a lot to me to help her have a better quality of life. She does not want to be in a nursing home. She had a nervous breakdown when her family said that she might have to go there. I understand that. At my nursing home job I see some elderly residents ask over and over again when they can go home. I see what happens when a person feels so powerless that they give up and begin to deteriorate rapidly. If at all possible, everyone should have the ability to stay in their home and live their their lives with as much privacy and independence as they choose.

I've become very close to my consumer. She tells me how hard it is to find PCAs who are willing to work for her. It's hard finding people that will do so much for so little, but it's also hard to sort through the list and find a PCA who fits your needs. We need to set up a system so consumers can find PCAs more easily, whether it's for regular work or to be backup PCAs—it's all the same. There are people willing to do the work, but right now it's too hard for consumers and PCAs to connect with each other.

There were days I was sick and needed to call out, but I knew she needed me, so I dragged myself to her house. One day my doctor said I shouldn't go in. My consumer even offered to have her brother bring me in, but I couldn't do it. She told me later that she had laid in bed until 1:30 in the afternoon. Her father finally called a pool nurse and paid her \$20 to empty her colostomy bag and her catheter and to make her some food.

Because of my health, I decided I couldn't work for her fulltime anymore. I told her I'd do backup when she needed it, but she had to start looking for replacement PCAs. The accident left her hands contracted, so it's a lot of work to make the calls. I helped her call new PCAs, interview them, and train them—which means I'm familiar with how hard it is to use the registry. It needs to be much more accessible and more detailed too. Each consumer's needs are different. There's a big difference between someone who needs limited, extensive, or total assistance. Consumers get frustrated and aren't able to find PCAs because it takes so much effort to go through the list.

I believe strongly that this system needs to be improved. I think in order to do that we need to have our voices and the voices of our consumers heard. I came out today because I wanted you to know what's really going on out there and why it's so important to PCAs that you create the quality home care council.