HELP AT HOME

Your resource for
Homemakers & Companions
Personal Care Assistants

P.O. Box 498, Avon, CT 06001-0498 (860) 678-8818

To Members of the Labor Committee:

My name is Arlene Horenstein at Help at Home, Inc. We provide Homemakers and Companions to elderly in a home care setting to help them stay home instead of being institutionalized at a greater cost to the state. 95% of my business is services rendered to the elderly under contract with the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders. My rates are set by the state of Connecticut and I work on a very thin margin in order to provide wages, benefits, and liability coverage.

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB-6187, which would require Connecticut employers to provide paid sick leave. This proposal will substantially increase our business costs and could force us to reevaluate the other benefits we provide our employees. At reimbursement rates of $16.32/ hr for a homemaker and $14.52/hr for companion services, wages plus unemployment compensation plus workers compensation and an average salary that slightly exceed the ever rising minimum wage, there is very little room for additional benefits.

There is constant discussion of unfunded mandates from the federal government to the state government and from the state government to the towns and cities. For those of us running small business, this proposal is the equivalent of an unfunded mandate. The rates of reimbursement under the Connecticut Home Care Program for Senior has not increased in several years and probably won't again this year. Yet, I have had major increases in costs – including mileage reimbursment to my employees (not reimbursed by the state under this program), increases in the cost of medical insurance, increases in wages, and taxes. There is just no room in MY budget for any additional benefits. Additionally, many of my employees are part time, working mothers who we allow flexible schedules to accommodate their child care needs. This would make record keeping a nightmare and would probably result in my cutting part timers or cutting flexibility in order to make record keeping even possible. The reduction of flexibility would force many of these mothers out of work.

I urge you to realize this bill not only affects large corporations in Connecticut who officers may be making excessive salaries and exorbitant bonuses, it also affect employees of towns and nonprofits, and those of us running small private business who try to do the right thing for our employees, but on VERY limited budgets.

We urge you to reject this proposal and work with the business community to control labor and workplace costs in Connecticut. Thank you.

Signed,

Arlene Horenstein
Owner