

Connie Foote, Personal Care Assistant, Bridgeport
Bill 6486
Human Services Committee, March 8, 2011

My name is Connie Foote. I've been a Personal Care Assistant for the last 7 years. I took the patient care course at Goodwin College and am now a Certified CNA and have certification in first aid and CPR.

Every day I assist my clients in their home with their daily needs- light housekeeping, exercising, preparing meals, making sure they've taken their meds, and taking them to the doctor for therapy. I have two clients that I care for- one client is six hours a day on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and the other client is two hours a day Sunday through Monday. Saturday is my only day off, which I spend with my children.

If I'm sick, my client's family member has to help them for the day or else they have nobody to cover. Other clients I've had don't have anybody to cover for me if I can't make it. If the client fell or something they'd just be on the floor. Because of this, my job requires me to be there in any circumstances, even on holidays.

This job is very physically demanding. I have to lift my clients and I've pulled a couple muscles. I know the clients don't mean to hurt me but it's just something required of the job. If we get hurt we don't get any days off- we have to keep coming in to make sure our clients are cared for and our bills get paid.

I think PCAs need vacation time, paid holidays, and a raise. My kids want to take a vacation with me but I just can't do it. I'm just working all the time so the only time I have with my kids is on Saturday.

We also need increased pay. This is a lot of work we're doing and the pay is as little as possible. I think there would be more incentive for PCAs to stay in the field if the pay was more like \$15 or so an hour.

Also, clients don't want to give one caregiver more than 24 hours because they'd have to pay workers comp then, so PCAs need at least two clients to get a full work week together. Clients can only have so much care and so we have to drive between clients and we don't get paid gas or mileage or time in the car.

I ask lawmakers to support forming a workforce council so that PCAs can have a voice to make our pay fairer and to get paid time off, like all other healthcare workers do.