

Dan Ludington, Home Care Client
Bill 6486
Human Services Committee, March 8, 2011

My name is Dan Ludington and I've had 32 caregivers in 2 years. It's very difficult. If the system breaks down I'm in big trouble since I rely on these caregivers for the most basic daily tasks. Luckily I have family. But there are people out there needing care who don't have family to fall back on.

I've gone from a home health care agency to a nursing home to an independent provider in 8 years. It took some pressure to get out of a nursing home, but I had a pretty strong advocate from the Money Follows the Person program to get me out. The nursing home is not a good life, especially for a 35 year-old. I have too much to offer, too much life to live.

I knew it would be sort of hard to get care after I left the nursing home, but I had no idea the situation would be so difficult. Money Follows the Person couldn't afford to pay for around-the-clock care, so they encouraged me to arrange a roommate who would care for me overnight in exchange for free rent. That was the best option for my situation, for my level of care. I had to then hire my aides on top of that, and run the household. The roommate we brought in turned out to be a drug addict. The background check didn't find that because she was self-employed and there was nobody to ask as a reference. It all ended when she passed out at 3am on me and my mom got involved.

My mom ended up moving in with me to take over for the overnight care. I was terribly relieved that she was available—I had no choice, really. Since then I've moved in to the house with my mom and her husband and my mom provides my overnight care every night, and my daytime care when caregivers fall through.

Without my mom I would have had to go back to the nursing home. My family has been there for me and I'm thankful, but what about people with no family? Frankly, home is best.

I'm disabled and I've had to use the home care system because I can't do anything else. The system seems to want to keep me at a certain level of care or quality of life, giving me just enough hours for the basics but not enough hours to be able to really thrive. We can't better our lives at this level.

We don't get enough hours, we can't pay enough. One of my best aides left to get more pay, because a nursing home can pay \$15/hour. I can't.

The biggest way I can sum it up is the system is broken. There's no way for disabled or handicapped to have anything to say in it. If something is wrong, what do we do? There's no direction for us. We get care but we don't seem to have any say for what goes

on in it. The idea of home care is good but our system is not done. We need to get it to work, getting the right people, getting them to stay.

That's why I'm calling for this commission to be created. With the commission, consumers like me can have a say and can start fixing the system so it works. We know what's wrong with the system better than anyone else does. I'm excited to have someone use my experiences with what's wrong in order to make things better.