

Eliane Effue, Personal Care Assistant
Bill 6486
Human Services Committee, March 8, 2011

My name is Elaine Effue and I've been a PCA since 2004. I've been with my current client just 4 months. I have just one client. I do PCA work because I care about individuals. I like to care about people and I want to help them. I feel like PCA work has been an overlooked profession.

Because I earn so little as a PCA, I can't afford a car. My daughter, who is also a PCA, shares a car with me. Because of this, I can only go to one client. Most clients are restricted so that caregivers can do a maximum of 25 hours a week or they have to pay us workers comp and benefits. So, with one client, I can't get full time hours. Right now I'm only able to work 15 hours a week for my client.

My living situation isn't ideal either. Right now I'm sharing a place with family. I'm not working enough hours to afford my own place. I never imagined that I'd have to share like this when I have a CNA certificate and work hard. My husband passed away and his social security helps, without that I would be in really bad shape.

I also don't have health insurance. I just applied through the state and got something through the mail. At first they denied me but I appealed. It took 4 months. I got food stamps too. I'm grateful. But I shouldn't need these supports when I'm trained to do a very in-demand job.

I never imagined any of this. When I did my courses they promised that we'd have independence and be able to better take care of our families. Everyone thought this work would be better for us. I have one son just starting college plus two kids in high school, but I can't even get full-time work.

I love my work and my client and don't want to have to find another job. We need to be able to work full-time hours, though, and so that we don't have to travel between clients. We shouldn't have to go to the state for assistance when we're working hard. Hopefully if we create a workforce council we can find a solution to this problem.