

***Patrick Ruane, Home Care Consumer, Westport
Bill 6486
Human Services Committee, March 8, 2011***

My name is Patrick Ruane. I had a stroke and am paralyzed on my left side. I can walk a little bit now but my left arm is pretty messed up. I need help every day with getting in and out of the shower, empty my urinals, make my bed, make me lunch and coffee, laundry.

I've had a caregiver for 6 months. I'm allowed a 36.25 hours a week, split between two caregivers. It was difficult to hire caregivers. I called through a list that came from a website. Some PCAs didn't call me back about the job or didn't show up for the interviews we set up.

I just lost a caregiver a couple weeks ago. She quit because she had a lot of problems with doing the work. She was unreliable and had lots of excuses for why she wasn't here. My main caregiver is wonderful. She does what she says she's going to do.

There are lots of changes the state could make to make my care better. One caregiver should be allowed to care for us full-time. The state should be more flexible on that. I should be able to hire one PCA for the 36.25 hours I receive, but it's not allowed.

Caregivers also need more pay and some insurance. If we paid more we'd get a better quality of worker, and they'd stick around longer.

I'm in favor of forming a commission to solve these problems and I'm calling for lawmakers to vote for it. We need someone to start giving consumers and caregivers a voice in the state. A commission could make it easier for me to find qualified caregivers and could make it so caregivers can get better wages and benefits. I think passing this legislation to make a commission is a good first step toward making the changes we need.