

Takelia Baldwin, Personal Care Assistant
Bill 6486
Human Services Committee, March 8, 2011

My name is Takelia Baldwin and I've been providing home care for more than 10 years. Two years ago I got my CNA certification. I started out working with my aunt to care for family members. Much of my family died of Cancer—lung cancers, brain cancers. A year ago one of my family members died of cancer but he was in a hospice home and I cared for him.

I also care for other clients when I can find them. It's very hard to find private-duty work, it's hard to find who's hiring. I'm looking for clients right now, going through the list of different places that might hire CNAs. I found my last client on a registry. I'm networking to try to find clients too.

My last client went into a nursing home four weeks ago. She needed more hours of care than the state would give her. She got 35.75 hours of care each week, but she had no weekend help. I would go there on Saturday to give her a shower to help out, but that meant less hours during the week for me. She also had trouble finding backup for if I or the other caregiver she had got sick. Now she's in a nursing home so that she gets more stable, constant care. It's terrible that she had to go to a nursing home because she couldn't find the care she needed. There are lots of PCAs like me looking for more clients. Why can't we get connected?

I would like to stay in this job into the future. Regardless of what happens, there will still be people with disabilities needing care. I'm staying with them. I got into this field doing it with my heart, and I need to make sure that people get the care they need, regardless of whether I get paid enough. I'm dedicated to caring for people, even if it ends up at a loss for me.

I'm calling on lawmakers to pass a Workforce Council bill so that we can find clients more easily. I know there are seniors that need my care, but it's very hard to find them. PCAs looking for clients and clients looking for us need a better way to find each other. Nobody should ever have to go into a nursing home just because they can't find a PCA like me.