

***Vivette Smith, Personal Care Assistant, Manchester
Bill 6486
Human Services Committee, March 8, 2011***

My name is Vivette Smith and I'm a CNA. I've worked in a nursing home for more than 21 years, but I've also done home care part-time for 3 years. I work at a nursing home 40 hours a week and 20 hours a week as a PCA.

I really enjoy my home care work. Home care work is 1-on-1, so I get to spend more time with clients and do more for them. I help my clients with showering, dressing, grocery shopping, light housekeeping, laundry, and any other basic things they need me to do. In my nursing home job I have 10-12 residents to take care of so I don't get to do all the little things, like blow-drying and setting hair right. Home care clients just get better care because we can do these things for them.

My clients find me through the list at Allied. When they need a caregiver they get the list and look for a caregiver that is near them.

My nursing home job pays more. But I have to take care of so many more people. It's a lot, it's very hard. I do the home care to make extra money, since I'm supporting two children. I couldn't do two nursing home jobs, that's just too much work. If I could do only home care work I would, but it doesn't pay enough and there are no benefits. I get benefits for myself and my children through my nursing home job, so I would lose our health care if I left.

I think PCAs should get personal days or vacation time, sick time, and health benefits. If I'm working enough hours as a PCA I should get the same benefits as from any other job. It's just a shame that home care is better care for the clients and better work for the caregivers, but it just isn't a good job the way it is now. It's time to pass a bill to make it better.

I support forming a Workforce Council so that both clients and PCAs can have our voices heard to make the system better. Clients can say what they need and we can work together to make PCA jobs real, professional jobs where people can earn enough to pay their rent. I hope you all will support this bill.