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Home care worker  
For Bill 5433  
Meriden

I've been a PCA since 2006. I decided to do this work because everyone always used to tell me that because I was so good at helping people, I should go into healthcare work. I took their advice and went to school and became a certified PCA. That means I am a CNA, plus phelotomy, CPR and basic first-aid.

Right after I finished school and before I got my first consumer, I experienced life threatening illness. I died a couple of times and had to be recussitated, and spent 2 months in the hospital. After several surgeries and having to learn how to walk and take care of myself again, I was able to finally start work as a PCA. Having had this experience myself gave me a new understanding of what my consumers experience. And my consumers told me that made them want to hire me even more because they knew that I understand what it's like to be in their place.

My first consumer was a woman who had been living with an acute case of MS for 30 years. She had been in an institution and had a really bad experience, they didn't take good care of her there. The only way she could leave the institution and come home was to have a live-in. So, I went and lived with her, even though I already had my own apartment.

Caring for this consumer required special training because she was unable to move or talk. I had to learn to read her lips as well as knowing how to clean her tracheotomy, administering her food and medicine through a feeding tube and every other need she had.

Now I work with another consumer who requires full care. My current consumer broke his neck in a bike accident when he was 16 and is what they call an incomplete quadropolegic. He needs my help to eating, bathing, for wound care and administering medication.

The biggest problem I have right now is that I need stable health insurance. Because of my previous illness, I require daily medication and ongoing medical care to stay healthy.

I also want to be able to work full time. Because I typically work for consumers who need a lot of care, they run over hours caps pretty easily. My consumer would like me to be able to work full-time but he can't afford to pay my workman's comp. If I get hurt at work, it's too bad for me – even though I can be really working more tan full-time because I work for multiple consumers.

I love the work I do and the consumers I work for. Fortunately for me, my consumers care about what happens to me too, but they don't feel like they have the power to change it. My consumers can't pay for my benefits, even though they want to. If there is a

problem with Allied –which there often are – they just get the runaround and can't get answers to their questions. My consumer wants to give me a pay raise, but he can't because he's not actually in charge of this system.

I support this bill because with the help of the union me and my consumer will be able to take better care of each other.