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Testimony against raised bill no. 5433

I am opposed to Raised Bill No. 5433. I am a PCA, and have been for ten years. I am opposed to this bill for the following reasons:

There are several reported incidents where the registry was released to Union recruiters, not for the stated purpose of backup care, but for intimidation purposes to vote for a union. I am strongly opposed to a Union of PCAs. I am not opposed to unions in general, actually I think they are very useful *in some industries*. Unions are appropriate for industries such as the automobile, factory, or inner-city public schools industries, industries in which there may not be the most desirable conditions for workers. In those cases the employees need a representative to make sure they are treated fairly and have favorable working conditions. This is not the case with PCA's. Would it be nice to have higher wages and benefits such as insurance and paid days off? Of course, but not at the detriment of the PCA/consumer relationship. Anyone who is a PCA knows that there is not a lot of money in this field, and they are not in this field for that reason, they are a PCA because they want a satisfying, rewarding job caring for people in a one-on-one environment. Having a union would greatly affect the relationship between PCA and consumer in a negative manner.

Besides the effect on the everyday relationship this could have, what about in the event that PCA's statewide decide that they are unhappy with wages or benefits and they need to take action. I realize that it would be illegal for PCA's to stage a strike, but what of a "sick out"? It is illegal for police officers to strike, yet we have all heard of the "blue flu". In the event that PCA's did decide to take action against their "employer" (in this case the third party making all the decisions) the consumers are the ones who would suffer and they are absolutely powerless to negotiate any conditions in which the PCA's might be taking a stand against. A "sick out" in this industry could result in deaths across the state. In a nursing home if there is a "sick out" there are at least administrators, secretaries, owners, etc. who can jump in and care for the residents. The residents may not receive the best care during a sick out, as one person might be caring for two or three times the amount of residents as usual, but they will receive adequate care and they will stay alive. In the event of a PCA "sick out" we are talking about individual consumers in their homes; who will the work force council get to cover the absent PCAs? Will the 9 members of the work force council go to consumers homes to cover these PCA's? There are no administrators or owners that can pitch in. In the event that PCAs are persuaded to stage a sick out, how many people could you find to cover their care? Even if you could find enough people to cover ½ of the consumers, how do you decide who receives care that day and who dies because there was not enough care available? Right now, there would never be a statewide PCA "sick out" because PCA's are not united; they are individuals. You need a united force in order to stage a statewide "sick out".

I do not disagree with the fact that there should be a uniting force for PCA's, to work on higher wages and benefits, but that force should not be the SEIU. I do not trust the SEIU to have the PCAs' and the consumers' best interests in mind. I have seen videos and documents in which the SEIU has only the best interest of the SEIU in mind. They have a reputation of using intimidation, bullying, and violence to get people to do what they want. Are these the type of people that we will trust the lives of our disability community with?

Thank you for your time

Michelle Tyler