

Testimony Submitted to the Committee on Labor and Public Employees

House Bill 5433 – An Act Creating A Procedure For Personal Care Attendants to Collectively Bargain With the State

March, 13, 2012

Good afternoon, M. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Katie Hearn, and I am a resident of Bloomfield. I support House Bill 5433, An Act Creating A Procedure For Personal Care Attendants to Collectively Bargain With The State. My testimony will be brief. I am not a personal care attendant. I have been working with older adults as a therapeutic recreation, or activities, director part time for approximately six years. I have worked in both assisted living and long-term care facilities alongside aides possessing varying degrees of formal training. Some aides are charged with taking care of one resident, while others take care of several residents at a time. But what they all have in common, is that they do work that a lot of us could not or would not do. They all assist our loved ones with their daily activities and challenges. Most of the aides I know who work full time do receive benefits, including vacation time and health care, and occasionally even overtime pay. However, for the personal care assistants seeking collective bargaining rights, they don't seem to get anything but subsistence wages. With the fast-growing need for care-giving services and the trend in consumer-directed, home-based care, it is long past due that we help to create better opportunities for some of our most vulnerable workers. Thank you.