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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE  
AN ACT CREATING A PROCEDURE FOR PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS  
TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE.**

**RAISED BILL NO. 5433**

**MARCH 13, 2012**

My name is Robbin Yoerkie, and I am a Personal Care Assistant. I am submitting testimony in opposition of Raised Bill 5433 both as a person who works for people with severe disabilities, as well as someone who advocates for others with disabilities.

Since 1998 I have been employed in the disability arena. I have been a personal assistant on and off since 1993. I am dedicated to my employer in any way she deems necessary. She is skilled at management, and like many other Waiver employers does not need centralization of a system that is already working, and working well. Personal assistants make it possible for people with disabilities to live at home, go to work, travel, and participate in the community and in society. I am hired by the person who knows best what will allow her to perform these functions. There is no way an outside entity can tailor to her needs the way she, herself can. People who live in urban or rural areas, with high levels of need who pursue very active lifestyles would be unable to find the support they need by an outside entity controlling the moves.

I do not think unionizing personal care attendants would be in our best interest, or in the best interest of our employers with severe disabilities. Wages will go up to cover costs, consumers will have less hours to work with, and what next from there!

This is supposed to improve the quality of care people receive. However, ironically, the creation of this bill would make it impossible for people to continue running and managing their own personal assistants. The centralization of such a bill will only serve to take away the independence and success, which is the point of the Waiver program, already in place. If it works, don't fix it. The core of this bill defeats the very principle of independence and self-success already successfully running and in practice.

This is an absolutely money seeking, no-forsight bill that only serves to erode the current system. Whoever wants the extra buck should go make a such a preposterous proposal to a community that can afford to lose their self made lives and success! Hence, this bill should go nowhere!

Please vote in opposition of Raised Bill 5433 so we may continue using our current system which is working very well for many of us. There are other actions to explore, for example, a refresher course in management and recruitment strategies for employers.