

My name is Diane Lowe. I am here to support Raised Bill 5453.

Both my parents each require a full time live-in caregiver. Years ago when my mother was diagnosed with dementia it was our promise to her that she would remain in her home. Within a few months my father who has a long history of heart issues was diagnosed with lung cancer. It was his wish to have the mass removed. After surgery he never returned to his active self. A phone call was made to our family's agency, whose managers set my mind at ease and sent us Sandra. We were not able to only have one caregiver due to the attention my mother needed. Needless to say, having two full time caregivers within a few years all the money my parents ever saved for was no longer. I can't imagine if the cost per caregiver had been triple for the two caregivers. In less than a year my parent's entire life savings would have been gone. November 2013 my mother was placed on Title 19. Regardless, I have kept my promise and my parents are still in their home.

I want to stress to you the importance of the continuity in caregivers. A few months ago both of my parent's caregivers took a weekend off. That weekend when I made a visit to see my parents, my father in tears looked at me and said "I want to go home". I explained to him he was home and he was O.K. It took no time at all to realize that because of the two new faces in the house he thought he was somewhere else. My dad refused to function until Sandra finally returned to him. As soon as he saw her, his face lit up and asked for his favorite oatmeal. The relationship that both my parents have with their caregivers is exceptional. The point of this statement is to show you that without the excellent caregivers provided to our family by Companions for Living my parent would not be home, and without question would not still be alive.

My parents are not the only people in this situation. I hope that consideration you will pass Raised Bill 5453. My father, a retired firefighter, and my mother a stay home mom, deserve to be at home as well as many other seniors do. Please don't take the only quality of life they have left by forcing the cost of care so high that they cannot afford stay home, but must move to a nursing home instead.