

March 5, 2015

Dear Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

My name is Robin Gilchrist and I am a home care worker from Bridgeport. Today I am speaking in support of House Bill # 6878, AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION LIABILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SERVICES FROM PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS.

I became a home care worker so I can help those who cannot help themselves. I really enjoy working with others and helping them with their needs, but I believe that we should also feel safe and supported when we are in our consumers' homes.

As a personal care attendant (PCA), I helped my consumer get in and out of the bed. My consumer did not have a hydraulic Hoyer lift in her home, so I had to carry her with no support. I knew that my consumer needed me and did not have the money to get a Hoyer lift, so I continued working until I couldn't handle it any more.

One day the pain was so intense that I had to go to the emergency room. There the doctors determined I needed surgery on both my hands and my shoulder. That meant that I couldn't work for weeks, with no income and with the bills piling up. My consumer was left without the care she needed and so was forced to hire someone else, so I also lost my job. Because there was no workers' comp coverage to help with my loss of income and medical bills, I had to rely on unemployment benefits, food stamps and state provided health care. To this day, I still cannot carry anything that weights more than 5 pounds, and I am still undergoing therapy for my shoulder.

Consumers would benefit from workers' compensation insurance because it gives them peace of mind that if there worker is injured while taking care of them, the worker will be taken care of and they can return to work faster. Also, providing workers' compensation coverage will help consumers keep the workers they have for longer periods of time by eliminating the hours cap that forces consumers to have many people coming in and out of their homes instead of one or two workers that are there consistently providing care.

The workers' comp insurance will help workers like myself and others to know that, if anything happens to us, we will be supported the same way we support our consumers. I'm asking for your support and help to insure that the elderly and people with disabilities continue to get good care, and that the men and women that help them are healthy.

Thank you.

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