

~ Erica Lewis, 54 Dewitt St, New Haven, CT ~

February 25, 2016

Dear Members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee,

My name is Erica Lewis. I live in new Haven and I have been a homecare worker for 12 years. I got into homecare by taking care of my elderly grandfather in high school. After he passed away, I took care my grandmother, and have been caring for her for over 10 years. I've cared for 5 different clients over those years, and I stay in this work because I love working with people and enjoy helping them out. I always wanted to work in health care, and to be able to help my grandma and others like her makes this work special for me.

But we need your help. I'm here today to ask you to please **support Senate Bill #210, AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION LIABILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SERVICES FROM PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS.**

In 2010, I had a client who was bed-bound couldn't wash, feed, lift or move himself. A mechanical Hoyer lift was needed to move him in and out of bed. I knew how to use a Hoyer lift because I had previously worked in a nursing home. Before that day, I had used his Hoyer lift to

move him up and down from his wheelchair to his bed or vice-versa a thousand times without incident -- but this time was different.

On this day, I noticed that he was coming down too fast, so I threw my body underneath him to break his fall. In the process, I smashed my foot on his bed. My big toe was busted open -- the flesh was split open down to the bone, and the wound got infected. I could not wear shoes, and doctors advised if I walked on it I could permanently damage the foot.

The doctors had me out of work for 2 months, but because I did not have workers' comp insurance, I had no income during that time to support me or my daughter. Without a source of income, I had no way to pay my rent. Luckily my mom helped me pay my rent so I didn't get evicted. But even with her help, I couldn't survive and had to apply for cash assistance from the state just to be able to buy food, pay the light bill, and cover my other bills.

I go above and beyond to protect my client's safety, but without workers' comp there is nothing to protect me and daughter in case of injury on the job. It makes me feel scared and angry. My clients depend on me for their care, but I shouldn't be penalized and have to be worried about being left out in the cold again if I get injured caring for people who can't care for themselves.