Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Darlene Deprey and I am a nurse working at Westside Care Center in Manchester, Connecticut. I have been a nurse for 10 years practicing in long term care. I am here today in support of increased Medicaid funding for my residents and also for Nursing Home workers like me.

First and foremost, my residents are my priority. I am here today because of my residents. They deserve the kind of care that gives them dignity as they age. I love taking care of them. It means so much to them when I can spend time with them and listen to them talk about their lives. I love providing small comforts like washing and styling a resident’s hair, or painting a resident’s nails. To me, they are family. I treat them with the same care that I would treat my mother, my father, my sister or brother. Unfortunately, less funding means I have less time to do these things for them. What do you think that does to the quality of care they are receiving?

I would like to tell you that four (4) days a year are fully staffed at my facility. We have all hands on deck during mealtimes and to answer call lights including management and administration. During these 4 days of full staffing meal distribution runs seamlessly. Residents have complimented me personally on how their food was served hot and in a very timely manner. The other 361 days per year some residents may have to wait 15 minutes before being served their dinners. And for many who are not able to feed themselves they may have to wait 30 minutes. That is unacceptable.

This is due to the lack of funding and I am here today to ask you to provide increased funding so that we can provide quality care for our residents. My co-workers and I fear that our only option to defend our residents is to strike if we cannot resolve this. We don’t want to do this, but will if we have to. Our residents are that important to us.

Thank you for your time.