Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Dana Mclean. I have been employed as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at Bloomfield Health for 30 years.

I sit before you as an advocate for my residents and my coworkers. We want better staffing conditions and a wage increase. Everything around us is rising, prices for basic things like food, clothing, rent, but we are staying the same and in some cases falling. The Governor has proposed increases to the sales tax that will affect workers and caregivers like me the MOST! If I’m barely affording the basics now, how am I supposed to live when everything is above us and we are drowning? How do you think it feels to work every day, and still have to ask for help?

At Bloomfield Health, we are working one aide to 12 to 15 residents at any given time and our resident population has changed significantly. We are now accepting psychiatric patients. How much time do you think should be spent with one resident who needs more care? 2 minutes? 10 minutes? The math is not adding up. As a caregiver for 30 years, I can tell you that patients, who need more care, especially if they have mental health issues, do NOT benefit from us rushing them through a routine. They need us to spend time with them, caring for them as a human being. They need respect and dignity. Put yourself in their shoes.

And while you are doing that, put yourself in our shoes. When my coworkers and I retire from Bloomfield Health, we will take with us our last paycheck, because the owner refused to accept state money that was offered to him in 2015. Out of spite, he told us “As long as you work here you will never get a pension.” I have taken care of people for 30 years. When I retire, who’s going to take care of me?

Please understand that my coworkers and I are prepared to go on strike to defend our residents and the careers that we chose. We know how important this work is and we know what our residents deserve. Please increase funding so that we can provide excellent care to our residents. Thank you.