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Lori Kowalkowski,
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Before the Banking Committee

In SUPPORT of HB 5426: AN ACT CONCERNING LIENS FOR UNPAID WAGES AND A REQUIREMENT THAT FISCAL INTERMEDIARIES MEET EMPLOYER TIMELY PAY OBLIGATIONS

Good Morning Senator Kasser, Representative Lopes and members of the Committee, my name is Lori Kowalkowski, and I am a PCA from Bridgeport. I've been caring for the same elderly couple who have Alzheimer's/Dementia for the last 5 years. My mom had a passion for people, but her father wouldn't allow her to go to nursing school because women didn't do that in those days. But my mother's passion became my passion; I love being hands on as a CNA. That's where you get the real appreciation and admiration. Nurses get all the glory; but it's CNAs and PCAs who do the true hands on work that lifts up our consumers. I spend more time at my consumers' home than I do my own home.

Last October, one payday, I realized I was missing 28 hours from my paycheck. The next payday, I realized I was missing ANOTHER 25 hours from my paycheck. My employer contacted Allied and they discovered their mistake and promised to fix it in the next payroll. But instead of adding back the 58 hours that I was missing, they paid me 30. To this date, they've never paid me the remaining 28 hours.

My employer investigated again, but in the meantime time was passing and my bills were falling behind. My employer was getting frustrated, and I was getting frustrated too. Those 28 hours had really set me back: my car payment lapsed and to this day I'm getting repo notices.

Eventually, my employer's family paid fronted me some of the money I was owed because I was short on my rent, but they want the money back and I can't pay it because still, 6 months later, I haven't received that 28 hours pay.

Because my consumers have alzheimers/dementia, they may not know my name, but they know ME and they know MY face. My conscience won't allow me to leave; if I let another PCA take my place it would be devastating for their care. Please pass HB 5426. Thank you for your time.