



SEIUHealthcare
United for Quality Care

March 10, 2020
Kara O'Dwyer, Personal Care Attendant
West Haven
SEIU District 1199 New England
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 Kara O'Dwyer and I have been a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) for five years under various Direct Care waiver programs administered by either the Department of Social Services (DSS) or the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). I have served 4 different consumers, people of varied age and disability. With all of these positions, I have unfortunately been at the mercy of the fiscal intermediary, Allied Community Resources, in regards to the hiring process, payment of my wages, and my consumers' continuity of care.

For five years, I have had to endure countless hours on hold with Allied trying to hunt down my paychecks and copies of my documents. I have had to wait on hold for hours to find out why I haven't been approved to work for a new consumer after several weeks and even months after applying, and I've found out nearly 2 weeks after a consumer's care budget had run out that I may not be able to be paid for any of the hours I had worked during that time.

Every time myself, my consumers, or their authorized representatives have an issue with Allied, we wait on hold for about an hour (sometimes longer) and then are blamed for things such as time sheets appearing too dark, too light, somehow not being received through fax or e-mail, when they are often sent both ways every pay period, or some other excuse to withhold pay. Many times I am told they cannot give me any information because I am not the consumer. As of today, I have not been paid in 4 weeks. I am expected to be paid tomorrow for 6 hours from 2/23-2/29/20, but have consistently worked from 2/2/20 to the present, and may be unable to be paid for any of the hours I worked the first 3 weeks of February.

As a single mother working 2 jobs and living with my mother, who also works 2 jobs (including as a PCA under Allied), I still struggle to make ends meet. We cannot afford late or missed pay. Rent, utilities, food, transportation, etc. are needs that don't go away just because a company or system is negligent in issuing an employee's pay. I urge you to pass this bill, to help ensure that the thousands of my fellow caregivers and I can be paid on time, every time, and treated with enough dignity and respect to be informed directly when there is an issue. Our consumers depend on our care, and we depend on our paychecks but for far too long, we have had to worry every pay period that our wages might not be there when a bill is due. Please pass HB 5426. Thank you for your time.