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Aida Colon, Consumer Employer
District 1199NE
Before the Labor Committee

In Support of SB 1002: AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR ISSUES RELATED TO COVID-19, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER STAFFING MATTERS and In Support of HB 6595: AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR MATTERS RELATED TO COVID-19, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER STAFFING ISSUES

Good Morning Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Committee. My name is Aida Colon. I am a home care consumer from Bridgeport and I am here today to support Senate Bill 1002 and House Bill 6595 on behalf of my PCA's

I wear an arm brace, and because of that I need help with daily tasks such as bathing, cooking, dressing, laundry, and other house work. In addition, I am unable to drive and I need someone to take me to the grocery store, church, medical appointments, etc. I have two Personal Care Assistants (PCAs) who help me with these activities throughout the day: Linda, who works 40 hours, and Esther, who works 22 hours. I love my home. I am happy here. I want my friends and family to be able to visit me whenever they feel like, and I don't want to lose comfort of my own bed or the companionship of my beloved dog, Lola.

I believe that my PCAs deserve a living wage with mileage and benefits, especially healthcare. I believe that they deserve to get paid on time every time. Linda has two young sons and Esther takes care of her granddaughter. I have already lost three PCAs in the past and I worry that I will lose Linda and Esther due to the burden of having to get by on poverty wages and the stress of frequent delays and mistakes on their paychecks. When the pandemic hit, the stress of this job was made even worse on them. The state didn't provide any or enough PPE, and many times they had to buy their own with their already poverty wages. In addition, PCA's got hazard pay for some of the pandemic, but nowhere near enough money and not for nearly enough time to do this job. And if any of their consumers or family get sick, they have to stay home and lose a day of pay, adding to their financial frustration. PCA's deserve hazard pay, sick leave and proper PPE.

Their frustration is also my frustration. If Linda and Esther leave I will have to go through the time and trouble of finding new PCAs, training them, establishing trust, and building up their knowledge and confidence. I have to go through this all over again. Not to mention that I would miss Linda and Esther, who I've grown fond of. PCAs like Linda and Esther take care of individuals like me. They need to be treated with respect and given PPE, hazard pay and sick leave like all essential frontline workers should be given, especially during this pandemic. Please pass Senate Bill 1002 and House Bill 6595. Thank you for your time.