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Karen Droz
Home Visitor, TEAM Inc. Early Education Program

**An Act Concerning Labor Issues Related to Covid-19, Personal Protective
Equipment and Other Staffing Matters, HB6595 and SB 1002**

Committee on Labor and Public Employees
March 11, 2021

Good afternoon, members of the Labor committee, thank you for hearing my testimony in support of the bills HB6595 and SB1002, about labor issues related to Covid-19.

My name is Karen Droz and I would like to speak as a Home Visitor with TEAM Inc. and a union member of 32BJ SEIU about my experience during the pandemic.

As a Home Visitor, when we were called back to work in March of last year, we were given a list of families to reach out to on a weekly basis. We were to gather information on their basic needs. As time passed, I began to deliver diapers, breakfast, and lunch to those families that were unable to pick up the materials due to transportation or being quarantined.

I had four families that contracted Covid throughout last year. I had other families that had other needs, such as applying for state benefits and other resources available to them. Many of the families I worked with were also non-English speaking, which increased their need for my involvement. I also have gone grocery shopping for a family in quarantine who had no support system.

In late October 2020, I was exposed to Covid during a home visit with a family. I had to quarantine for 14 days. Team paid me, and I didn't have to use my PTO. But I know that other people who have had to quarantine more than once have had to use some personal PTO. That's one of the things that we think companies shouldn't do when we're put ourselves on the line like we do.

In a meeting we had, a TEAM teacher who is 69 told us she had applied for unemployment and Human Resources denied her application. They also told her to cease any application for unemployment.

We are asking you please to help us get the same respect and care we show to all our families and children, by passing this bill so we can have both essential pay for all the risks we take, and a guarantee that if we have to quarantine or fall sick, our employer will continue to support us. Thank you.