

Written Testimony in Support of LD 1573

An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues

Health and Human Services Committee

Monday, May 3, 2021

Good morning, Senator Claxton, Representative Myer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1573 *An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues*.

My name is Ruta Barrett and I am a PSS at Assistance Plus. PSS, DSP, DLS, and CNA are the backbone of the healthcare system. Yet we are the last to be recognized. We are called essential workers. We have worked right along with the doctors and nurses during this pandemic. We assist people with disabilities, the elderly, and those living with health-related needs. We provide a service that allows these individuals to stay in their homes, one client at a time.

Our job is emotionally, physically, and mentally draining. It might seem like an easy task to cook, clean, bathe someone but imagine the fear of not being able to do this yourself, and a stranger is here to "help you". There is a big trust that comes with providing these clients the services that we do. You have to be a good listener, be patient, and compassionate. Without these qualities you lose the client's trust.

I chose this profession because I love to help people maintain their freedom that would otherwise be taken away if they were placed in a residential care facility. I have a client that is homebound without my services she wouldn't get her basic needs met. Sometimes it's just companionship the client needs to know someone cares. I struggle personally knowing there isn't enough staffing to cover the hours within this profession which makes it difficult knowing there is a long waiting list.

It would be a blessing if there was an increase in wages to introduce others to join our team. We could then meet other client's needs effortlessly. I have been in this profession in one role or another. I have worked as a CNA, DSP, PSS since I have been 16 years old. There have been challenges in every department. We, as an educated group of people, can make a difference together.

Thanks so much for your time,

Ruta Barrett

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