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United for Quality Care

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Jess Golab, Personal Care Attendant
North Windham
SEIU District 1199 New England
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Jess Golab and I am a Personal Care Attendant from North Windham. I've been a homecare provider for over 15 years, and I've cared for clients through Allied since 2011. I really love and value the one-on-one relationship I build with each of my clients.

The woman I care for now depends on my care every day to get out of bed, get dressed, do her physical therapy exercises, take her medication, go to her doctors' appointments, and get her shopping & banking done. My clients become almost like family, and it's impossible to avoid getting attached despite the challenges.

My problems with Allied began in 2011 when I was not paid on time. I've had problems with them on and off ever since. Last year has been worse than any other year before it. The first time I wasn't paid was March 29th after my client had a knee replacement. Even though the last day on my timesheet was March 22nd, four days before my client's surgery, Allied held up my paycheck for two weeks until her discharge paperwork was submitted. My pay finally arrived two weeks later, which meant I couldn't verify my income and I lost my food stamp benefit. The second time they paid me late was June 7th. They told me to revise my timesheet though it's still not clear why; there were no errors that I could see and I didn't change anything in the revision. The third time they paid me late was July 5th. They ended up rejecting my timesheet because they didn't like my zero in front of 05:45 on the timesheet.

Because of all the discrepancies in my pay, DSS wanted to verify my income in order to restore the food stamp benefits I lost, and they requested Allied fill out a W-35 form. **Allied never filled out the form.** Allied also failed to respond to requests to confirm that I stopped working for a second client in March of last year. Ultimately, because of the lack of response and documentation, DSS told me my time limit had lapsed and I was no longer eligible for my overdue food stamps benefits.

I've also been held in contempt of court for child support payments because of multiple delayed paychecks over the past 7 months, and I've missed credit card payments which has decreased my credit score by almost 80 points.

I'm a mom of 4, an unpaid caregiver for my mom who is disabled, and supporting my cousin who just had surgery, in addition to being a PCA. I have a lot on my plate. The last thing I should have to worry about is whether I'll get paid for the time I put in every day to care for my client.