



Good Morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Committee, my name is Anthony Ligon and I'm a homecare provider living in New Haven. I've been a caregiver all my life, even before I got paid for it. This is something I do that comes from the heart; it's a passion for me. My great grandmother had Alzheimer's and my cousin has down syndrome, and I've always helped care for them. I'm here today to ask you to allocate funding to PCAs like me who need health insurance, retirement, and better wages so that we can provide for ourselves and our families.

I became a homecare worker in 2013. I now have three consumers, and I care for and support them each in unique ways. One of my patients has a traumatic brain injury. He came home 5 years ago in a vegetative state, but thanks to the 24-hour-care of homecare workers like me, he has made a lot of progress. I do overnight care for him and he needs help with walking and balance even to go to and from the bathroom. He is nonverbal and we are working with him on relearning to speak – but without caregivers like me, he would not be able to progress in life, and his family members wouldn't be able to carry on with their lives and hold jobs because they would have to care for him around the clock.

I feel honored to be a person that takes care of other individuals, but I do not feel honored or respected by the fact that this job doesn't provide health insurance.

It's ironic that we're providing health services to help other individuals live independently, but we're not provided health care in return. I do not have health insurance currently, because I can't afford it, and this has impacted me in multiple ways over the last year. For one, I currently need a root canal but I can't afford it; I had to come out of pocket to partially deal with the problem, but it's still not fixed permanently. Secondly, last spring, before DDS or DSS had sent any PPE to us, my consumer contracted COVID. I cared for him and drove him to the hospital without any protection, and dodged getting COVID myself, but what if I hadn't? What if I had contracted COVID without health insurance? It feels degrading that I even have to worry about these questions, or wonder how I'll pay for basic things like a root canal.

Please allocate the funding that allow PCAs to gain access to health insurance, to give us the stability we need to care for our consumers without sacrificing our own dignity.