



**SEIU**Healthcare®  
United for Quality Care

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Louis Morales, Personal Care Attendant  
Bristol  
SEIU District 1199  
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee. My name is Louis Morales and I've been a PCA for a year. I live in Bristol and care for my girlfriend as a PCA; my brother is also a PCA for my mom. It means the world to both my girlfriend and my mom to have PCAs because they can't live independently without us.

Both of them need help with cooking, cleaning, bathing, transport to doctors' appointments. But it's not just the physical tasks; PCAs become like family even if we're not related. It becomes more than a job. We provide companionship, love, and support, just like family.

I love this work, but it doesn't love me back. Other than the consumers we care for, no one else appreciates the work we do. We don't have health insurance, we don't have paid sick days, we don't have retirement, and we don't make a living wage. Sometimes we don't even get paid on time, but we still work because we love our consumers and we're not going to let the consumer suffer just because Allied didn't do their job.

I make \$16.25/hour and just started working full-time so I'm pretty sure I'm going to get cut off Husky again soon, which will put me right back where I started without health insurance. I'm a diabetic and I don't know what I'll do if my insurance gets cut off again. Before I was a PCA, I worked at a pizza place and went without health insurance for 25 years, so I know what it's like and I don't want to go back to that.

Pretty soon, the minimum wage is going to be \$15/hour. But as PCAs, we have someone's life in our hands, and we shouldn't just be making minimum wage. We need a true living wage, which in Connecticut is over \$20/hour. Like any job, the more we earn, the more motivation we have and dedicated we can be.

We're not asking for a handout; we work, we pay taxes, and most of our Consumers also worked and paid taxes all their life. All we're asking for is to be treated as professionals, because our care and support helps keep our consumers out of facilities and at home, where they want to be. Homecare will continue to grow; we may all need homecare providers one day. Our hope and dream is that with your help as legislators we can move toward a future where our work is valued and respect as a profession. Thank you.