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United for Quality Care

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Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Kara O'Dwyer and I have been a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) for six years under various Direct Care waiver programs administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Developmental Services. I have cared for five different consumers, people of varied age and disability. With all of these positions, I have unfortunately been at the mercy of the fiscal intermediary, Allied Community Resources, in regard to the hiring process, payment of my wages, and my consumers' continuity of care. I am here today to ask you to discontinue their contract with the State of Connecticut, and help 1,000's of PCA's throughout Connecticut.

For five years, I have had to endure countless hours on hold with Allied trying to hunt down my paychecks and copies of my documents, to find out why I haven't been approved to work for a new consumer after several weeks and even months after applying, to finding out nearly 2 weeks after a consumer's care budget had run out that I may not be able to be paid for any of the hours I had worked during that time. Every time myself, my consumers, or their authorized representatives have an issue with Allied, we wait on hold for about an hour (sometimes longer) and then are blamed for things such as time sheets appearing too dark, too light, somehow not received through fax nor e-mail when they are often sent both ways every pay period, or some other excuse to withhold pay. Many times I am told they cannot give me any information because I am not the consumer.

As a single mother working 2 jobs and living with my mother, who also works 2 jobs (including as a PCA under Allied), I still struggle to make ends meet. We cannot afford late or missed pay. Rent, utilities, food, transportation, etc. are needs that don't go away just because a company or system is negligent in issuing an employee's pay. I urge you to hold this company accountable and help insure that the thousands of my fellow caregivers and I can be paid on time, every time, and treated with enough dignity and respect to be informed directly when there is an issue. Our consumers depend on our care, and we depend on our paychecks but for far too long, we have had to worry every pay period that our wages might not be there when a bill is due. Thank you for your time.