

**Testimony for HB 489**

**Residential Service Agencies – Reimbursement – Personal Assistance Services**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

To Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of the Health Government Operations Committee:

My name is Cynthia Neely. I live in Baltimore City and I have been a home care worker for 2 years. I enjoy the work I do because I have seen how elderly people need support and many families do not want to put their loved one in a nursing home. I lost my job during COVID and I knew I would be filling a great need in the state for home care work. However, home care workers need more support and protection. I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 489 which would prevent home care work misclassification.

Home care worker misclassification means that instead of being employees with full entitlement of a minimum wage and protections, we are classified as independent contractors. Many of us do not even know that we are misclassified until we start sharing our experiences of not getting paid overtime or for the time we spend commuting between homes. Because of low pay and poor benefits, many of my colleagues leave the field for a more stable, less stressful jobs. By preventing worker misclassification, this legislation would reduce turnover and improve quality of care.

I have a co-worker who is filing an 1099 form instead of a W2. who are not getting the full benefits of being an employee. This is a widespread issue and it needs to be prevented. Because I don't have a car, I am taking transit which is often unreliable or catching Ubers. Our agencies do not accommodate us for commute time. Sometimes, paying for Ubers costs me a days' worth of pay. The state's public dollars are being used by agencies who are breaking the law and undercutting their staff.

There are a lot of bad actors among home care agencies that continue to illegally misclassify their workers and it's time we held them accountable. I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 489.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Neely

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