

February 5, 2024

Homecare Workers Employment Act of 2024 HB189

Hello, my name is Linda Mamani and I am a member of the National Domestic Workers Alliance. For more than 20 years I have been a care worker. I've stayed in this industry for so long because I like to help others. Though I have experience working in the private sector, I've made the decision to move to the public sector because I heard that wages would be higher working with agencies, but I realized that this is not true and that there's no benefits either. After all these years working in the private sector, I was looking to the public sector to answer some of the challenges that we have as private employees, such as finding clients, negotiating our own wages, just to name a few. However, the wages I have encountered as I look to transition to the public sector are not enough to sustain my family.

I am a single mother and I have to work to support my daughter. My hope is to be financially independent and not rely on anyone for help, like anybody else who has a job with dignity and respect. I've interviewed for direct care jobs that offer \$17 per hour, but after deductions, I know that this will not be enough to sustain me and my family.

There is currently a home care crisis, where there are not enough home care workers to take care of our increasingly aging population and others who need assistance. People like me, who have years of experience providing care, don't feel incentivized to do direct care work because the wages are too low to survive on. Oftentimes, private families pay more than what agencies do. This is not fair to the people we take care of, or to us. We take care of others as best as we can, and we want to feel taken care of too.

I ask you to pass the Home Care Workers Employment Act of 2024 so that there is transparency around Medicaid funded-worker's wage rates, and to lay the groundwork for higher wages for direct care workers in order to solve the care crisis. So that workers like me, who have over decades of experience in care taking, are attracted to Medicaid funded work. I have been thinking about my own retirement because as I am getting older, these are the things I have to think about. We take care of so many other people, but who will take care of us?