

Twyla Nelson, Home Care Aide
Testimony to Senate Finance Committee
June 09, 2015

I am here today, along with home care workers from across the state, to ask you to keep the 10% increase for agency based home health aides in House Bill 64. This small increase would allow me and thousands of home care aides in Ohio who could not be here, the chance to continue in a field that we truly love and where we can make a difference in the lives of the people in our care.

I became an aide when I was in school to become an RN. I realized during my clinicals the passion I had for people and that I could help them stay in their home and get better care. I was a direct care worker for the mentally disabled for 15 years before entering nursing school. I am not currently in school but hope to go back soon. Once I become an RN, I hope to remain in home care because I think it's what is best for anyone who wants to stay home.

Like many home care aides, I work six days a week, some days from 8am-8pm with breaks. I do this not because my agency doesn't want to pay me more, but because they can only pay what they are given by the state. I truly believe my agency has a genuine concern for everyone in the company from the bottom to the top. They don't treat us as though we are at the bottom, they treat us like we are the core of the company.

I have two teenage children at home and I am a single parent with no family support locally. So if there is an emergency, I have to take off work. My oldest child also works to help support the family and herself. I usually schedule to work while they are in school, then take off to pick them up, feed them dinner and then go back to work. If my daughter has to work, I rearrange my schedule so we are at work at the same time, which means I have to leave my other teenage child at home alone. While they can take care of themselves, it doesn't allow me to be home with them to help if they need me.

I work Saturdays too during the day, leaving me time to spend with them at night. Sundays I do schedule myself off so we can attend church and spend some time together as a family. If I were to receive a raise, it would give me some piece of mind that I wouldn't have to work so much to provide for my family. I wouldn't have to work pay check to pay check or possibly a second job. I don't currently have a second job, but I've been thinking about going back to my old retail job while my kids are out of school this summer. The pay is not better, but they can be flexible in the hours to work around my home health aide job.

I know other people who have been interested in home health aide jobs, but won't because of the amount of time they have to work to make a decent living. I'm also worried about getting burned out. I truly love being a home health aide, but the amount of hours I have to work to make ends meet because of how much I'm paid could easily cause this. Then the clients start to suffer because I can't give it my all.

I hope that you support the 10% increase for home care aides currently in House Bill 64. I really love being a home health aide. It's sad that even though I care a lot about my work and it means a lot to the person I'm caring for, I might not be able to stay with them because I can't provide for my own family and be there when they need me.

Thank you for your time.