

Please share with members of the Ways and Means Committee for their meeting Friday May, 1.

Hello, my name is Debra Howze. I am writing on behalf of my union SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, including the tens of thousands of homecare workers we represent. I am a homecare worker and a member of the SEIU Healthcare Minnesota Executive Board.

I really appreciate the bi-partisan support for HF168 which would provide a temporary PCA rate increase for the COVID emergency. Last week I testified on a similar bill in a Senate committee that received strong bi-partisan support.

I work every day as a home care worker caring for three different clients.

I am worried for both my health and my client's health during this pandemic.

One of my clients is 100 years old and the others have compromised immune systems. Homecare workers keep the most vulnerable in their community, not in hospitals or nursing homes. A wage increase could really take some stress of the shoulders of workers like me who are on the front lines of making sure our most vulnerable are safe in their homes.

I am taking extra trips to the grocery store, or the pharmacy for my clients, it might mean stressing less about filling the gas tank or being able to buy an extra gallon of milk or a loaf of bread for myself and my family. It's vital that PCA's and family caregivers get this wage increase, PPE, and sick time RIGHT NOW or the care crisis is only going to get more critical.

Thank you for the opportunity to share.

Debra Howze