

Co-Chairs Rayfield; Johnson and Steiner-Heyward - my name is Serene Fung and I am a care provider in Downtown Portland OR. I have worked as a care worker for the last 14 years.

I am here today to ask you to prioritize funding that supports the thousands of care workers who have masked up and shown up to work throughout this entire pandemic, to keep people safe and healthy.

**Home care workers have been on the frontlines of COVID.** We have always been essential, not just during a pandemic. Yet feel like we are treated as **expendable, under-valued and under-paid.** We continued to work throughout the pandemic, without adequate PPE, without hazard pay or extra support from the state. For the first time in my life, I realize it is the calling of the heart that keep me working to care for another human being. I do this work because it allows me to take care of my consumer with an early stage of dementia and keep him safe in his own home where he belongs. Without this program, my consumer would likely end up in a facility where he wouldn't receive the person to person care from me. Worse yet, he may be part of the casualty statistics in the nursing home.

My consumer is an 85 year old wounded veteran hero. COVID has made it challenging to provide community and safety skills. I have been searching the internet for ways to teach him skills, taking classes to understand dementia and come up with creative ways to teach him to stay safe.

I visit my consumer regularly both morning and evening to give him a normal daily routine. In the morning I greet him by his name and introduce myself accordingly and announce the day of the week; the day of the month and the day's weather. You may not believe: **Every day is a first day for my consumer, because he has no memory of Yesterday.**

With that said there have been many positive things happening for him. We use the COVID lock down to spend time working on using his electronic media resources that keep him company.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** the state is set to receive millions of dollars for home and community-based care. All we are asking for is recognition of the work we have done for over a year now. Please consider the allocations to home care funding as **investments that will have a great return not only now but in the future.** And consider those of us who have been working throughout the pandemic exposure as **deserving of Essential Worker Pay** from the American Rescue Plan. Thank you, God bless America!!!