

Ways and Means

For the record, my name is Shelly McCarthy, and I am a Care Provider in Coos Bay. I have worked as a care provider for 15 years. I am here today to ask you to prioritize funding that supports the care workers who have masked up and shown up to work throughout this entire pandemic, to keep people safe and healthy.

Since homecare is primarily a female profession, predominantly women of color and immigrants. We have had to fight for fair wages, respect, and benefits. Care providing is one of the most stressful, difficult, and demanding jobs a person can perform, especially during a pandemic!

Imagine looking into the eyes of those we care for and watching them struggle to keep their dignity, and listening to their fears when they are near end of life, or unable to get the care they need due to lack of sufficient designated care hours.

Moreover, in rural areas like Coos Bay there are a lack of medical resources, broadband, and longer travel times. Therefore, when state assessments are conducted for consumers the assessments need to be specific for individuals living in rural areas.

There are two essential concerns that must be addressed or the impact would be unthinkable for all parties concerned:

First, it is essential for care providers to get fair wages and hazard pay, because we are risking our lives and have no financial nets to fall back on. Second, the state must protect the quality of care seniors receive or risk their health or even cause unnecessary deaths.

I thank the ways and means committee for your time and hope you hear my message with your hearts. I also hope you think about the eyes you will be looking into and what kind of care you will be receiving when your life journey comes to an end.