

Re: April 21, 2021 Ways and Means Roadshow 5:30pm meeting.

Co-chairs Johnson; Steiner-Heyward and Rayfield.

Hello,

My name is Cheryl Monteiro and for the past 20 years, I have consistently worked with the public, as a PSW, in Portland and Gresham, Oregon, and simultaneously worked as a Home Care Worker for 12 of those years. I have also labored in Nursing Homes and have valued that hard work too.

I am here today to encourage you, to prioritize the funding you will be receiving from ARPA and make certain that funds will be allocated to support care workers as you develop a final budget for the state.

It has been over a year since the pandemic began, and during that time essential workers, just like me, have been there to keep those we care for safe. Oregon has ranked among the states with the fewest COVID cases, because of workers like me who have shown up every day, worn masks, protective gloves, and coverings. Many of us have also provided disinfectant cleaners and sanitizing products – all paid for with our own funds.

What we do should be valued, respected, and rewarded. Because I have made my clients a real priority daily, I have been blessed with many customers through the years who have kept me extremely busy and happy. Since I work mainly with individuals who struggle daily with special needs it is a joy to see them rise above these challenges and successfully live independently, and again, I also worked supporting seniors for 12 years as well. It has been extremely gratifying assisting people remain independent in their homes as this program, when appropriately staffed, there is no question this program can even give better care and organization than what I often observed in nursing homes!

It is so important that our citizens be cared for by workers who will show up daily with integrity and knowledge. Those of us who do deserve recognition for all our unique capabilities and challenging hats we wear daily and that we be rewarded with adequate pay for our labors. Unless you have performed these types of services yourself, giving it your whole heart, I am not sure you could ever know what it means to finally be given a well-deserved nod of recognition.

So today I am petitioning you for an upgrade in our wage. One that will provide us with an Essential Worker's bonus, or that "Hero's" raise.

Oregon's Homecare and PSW program is a strong one and is a wonderful example of how people, who qualify, can remain in their homes being cared for successfully and safely.

I hope you will find it in your budget, and within your heart, to reward those of us who remain on the front lines and continue to give all we have got as we continue to care for those in our communities with consistency, dignity, respect, and love.

Thank you so very much for your time.



Cheryl A. Monteiro