

My name is Cristal DeJarnac, I'm a Homecare Worker in Bend and I support Senate Bill 602. I've been providing care for my friend who is disabled and has cognitive issues for 7 years now. I set up her medications, help her with wound care, shopping, errands, cleaning, meals, and I drive her to all her appointments. I'm there at all her Dr visits, and when she goes into the hospital, I'm basically admitted too. With her cognitive issues she doesn't always understand what the Dr's and nurses are asking and telling her and she sometimes gets stuck and can't reply to their requests. That's where I come in. She always says that these are the times when she needs me most.

I live in my old 5th wheel on my Consumers property due to the high cost of living in Bend where it now takes 60% of your income just for housing. For state paid Homecare Workers like me, who make just \$17.77 an hour, that equates to about 75-80% of our income. And with inflation, things have only gotten worse, I'm now paying double what I paid just a year ago every time I go grocery shopping. I know of some Care Providers who are on the brink of eviction and will soon be living in their cars on the streets, there are some workers in Redmond who have had to resort to selling their Plasma just to barely get by. As you can see, we don't do this work to get rich, we do it because we genuinely care for our Consumers.

Unfortunately, our wages are too low. Like many other Homecare and Personal Support Workers who have to supplement their Homecare income by having a second or third job, I'm also a Notary and I do Gig work. It is shameful that Oregon expects caregivers to work for poverty wages.

Workers in other industries are making it clear what they need to be paid to do the work. That's why Walmart is hiring at \$18-\$20, McDonalds is hiring at \$17-\$22 with a sign on bonus. So now it's time for us to do the same. We literally hold people's lives in our hands, we are the first ones to notice changes in our Consumers because we are with them all the time.

I deeply care for my Consumer and I want to continue being a homecare worker, but it is getting harder and harder every day. I work hard and I shouldn't have to sacrifice getting my own needs met. Homecare Workers provide a valuable service to Oregon and the people who rely on their services, and they deserve to be treated with Dignity and Respect, which includes better pay and benefits.