

February 11th, 2024

My name is Jolene White and I reside in Grants Pass, Josephine County. I love the work I do as a homecare worker, which I've done for ten years. I love to lift the spirits of the folks I care for and to allow them the dignity and security they experience in remaining in the places they call home. This work is vital to the community and an economically sensible option in fulfilling the needs of our aging and disabled population.

But I don't like my job. Notice I said – I like the work I do. A job can be satisfying in a lot of ways. The jobs of being a homecare worker, personal support worker or personal care attendant in the programs administered by the state leave much to be desired. Workers do not have a central resource for human resource purposes EVV systems are problematic, pay is often late or incorrect, background checks take a ridiculous length of time and the general administration is incohesive. Consumers' safety is at risk when case managers are not available to authorize care in urgent situations or workers are not matched to those in dire need of care.

This workforce is disrespected, poorly administered and not sufficiently supported. In addition, workers are not compensated according to the standard the state has set for private entities providing parallel work. Homecare is a growing industry and demand is expected to sharply increase in the coming years. Program and workforce administration is not rocket science; the state has had decades to build and support this workforce. Yet this has not been done successfully. Let us find someone who can.

Homecare Modernization Act: Agency with Choice (HB4129) is the answer. This will allow for privatization of workforce management, with government agency oversight. This is the solution to many of the ills that have plagued this workforce. Care providers serve vulnerable members of our population: the State needs to provide proper support and compensation of this dedicated workforce.

Thank you,

Jolene White

Grants Pass, Josephine County