

Testimony for Minnesota State House of Representatives by Wendy Beard

Regarding: Parents getting paid to be paid to be PCA for their children or to care for their spouse.

Hello everybody and thank you for having me testify at this hearing. My name is Wendy Beard. I have a husband, a 20 year old college student, and a 15 year old daughter with Huntington's Disease.

Ashley has qualified for PCA services for several years. PCA stands for Personal Care Attendant. Children and adults qualify for PCA services when they need a higher level of care than ordinary life, parenting, childcare, and babysitting services provides. There are also In Home Support People a step up from PCA with higher wages, and Home Health Nurses, a step beyond that.

Without PCA and similar services, parents would be taking care of their child 24/7 and have no time to work a job, do errands, or have a break. Sometimes 2 people are needed at a time to care for someone so that even when parents DO have a PCA, one of them has to still be home helping as well. I can only trust long-time PCAs to watch Ashley alone. With my carpal tunnel hands and Ashley being almost 100 pounds, I need her dad sometimes to assist me in caring for her. As she deteriorates, she will need 2 people to care for her at a time.

There is a shortage of caregivers and has been as long as Ashley has had need of them. So most of the time we have only had someone a few days a week instead of 7 days a week. That means long days for me where it is hard to make business calls and I can't go shopping or go to work and my hands get sore.

Before Covid, I, as a licensed teacher, could substitute a few days a week while Ashley was at school and when I had a PCA to get her off the bus. This year between schools being shut down and Hopkins having a shortened school day all year, and no school on Fridays, I will only be able to sub a full day a few days all year when Ashley is in respite care. Many other parents can never work because there is no job they can do because of the need to care for their child, and they have no income.

I am so grateful that from Dec. 4-Feb. 7 I was paid up to 48 hours a week to care for Ashley. I have to work with her no matter what and I couldn't work outside of the home no matter what, so thank God, and the state legislature that I had a full-time income for two months.

There is already money set-aside for paying PCAs when it is approved. So allowing parents to be paid PCAs does not even requiring coming up with the money for it. They are simply getting paid with money already there for paying a PCA. Please pass another bill allowing parents and spouses to be paid PCAs for their own children and spouses.

I am available for any questions you may have. Thank you.