

Bethell Joint Committee on HCBS and KanCare Oversight

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Testimony by Susan Moffitt-Roberson

Thank you Chair Landwehr and committee members for allowing me to present my written testimony to you.

My name is Susan Moffitt-Roberson from Chanute. I have been on the Physical Disability waiver since 2001. I worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for 18 years till I acquired a severe back injury from my job. My health began declining a few years later including respiratory issues requiring oxygen 24/7. I developed severe arthritis in both knees and became very obese. Things improved some after weight loss surgery, surgery on both knees, and no longer need oxygen but other health problems developed such as lymphedema in my legs and Bipolar II disorder. Because of HCBS, I have workers to help me with housekeeping, some cooking, wrapping my legs due to lymphedema, and transportation to medical appointments and shopping. And if I am having a really bad day they sometimes help me with dressing.

I have employed quite a few direct support workers (DSW) in 21 years. A few years ago I was employing four DSW's. Today I have just two working for me. Most of the time when one of my workers quits, it is to find a better paying job. Yet the job they do is so very important to every part of my life. It is because of my workers that I am able to stay living in my own home, participate in activities in my community, spend time with my children and grandchildren, be an active member of society, and feel safe in my own home.

Currently it's getting harder and harder to find people willing to work as a Direct Support Worker. I believe in rate parity across the HCBS waivers. Providers get the same rates across waivers and pay the same wages. All DSWs need a wage increase, all DSWs should be earning the same wage. No matter what waiver a customer is on based on the type of our disability. We all should be able to have a DSW as good and well paid as anyone else.

Now I need the care that I once provided to others. We need the state to support both those of us needing assistance in our daily lives and those that provide this assistance. Equality of wages regardless of the waiver. Giving them the wage they deserve keeps them working for us. That keeps us in our homes where we deserve to be.

SOUNDS LIKE A WIN/WIN SOLUTION TO ME!

I am happy to answer any questions at any time.

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