

Submitted Testimony

Joint Legislative Public Budget Hearing Workforce Development February 3, 2016 Testimony on Behalf of Daisy Gascon, CNA

Hello, my name is Daisy Gascon. My husband, Marty, and I both work as Certified Nursing Assistants at a skilled nursing facility in Houghton, NY. We love the work we do. We have been working as CNA's for 7 years. Our hourly rate is \$11.16 an hour. Those are the facts, but the truth is that we struggle.

We support a family of 7 with our income. Our children all live with us and range in age from 9 years to 23 years old. We both work an average of 60 hours a week just to pay the bills. We work these hours at the expense of our family time. We share a vehicle which means we try to have the same schedule. Things are difficult to work out when our children have school functions, sports, and all the other things young people would like to do.

Our other family is the one we take care of at the nursing home. They mean the world to us too. I suppose if they didn't, we wouldn't be doing this work. It is hard for us to provide the best care to our residents when our employer is having such a difficult time attracting quality care givers for such a low rate of pay. People simply can't really afford to work here. There is no access to public transportation, and affording and maintaining a vehicle is expensive.

After working 7 years to earn a rate of \$11.16, and receiving wage increases of only \$0.25 or less for the support unit workers, we know it will take us decades to reach \$15.00 an hour. We are concerned about what happens during that time. Something needs to change, we need to do a better job providing funding for the people who really can't work and providing the people who are working with what they need for their families. We need to increase Medicaid reimbursements and increase the minimum wage.