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## **Testimony before the Joint Legislative Hearing** **Workforce Development Budget**

Wednesday, January 24th 2018

**Sylvia Vogelmann, Jews for Racial & Economic Justice & the New York Caring Majority**

Good afternoon. My name is Sylvia Vogelmann. I am a senior & a member of Jews for Racial & Economic Justice. I'm honored to join Karla, Byran, & Allison in testifying today on behalf of the New York Caring Majority.

Seven years ago, I broke my right ankle and needed emergency surgery. I was unable to put any pressure on the ankle for 6 weeks. Being single I had no one to care for me and help me with my daily activities. Friends would bring me meals but I needed help for everything else including bathing. I was not on Medicare or Medicaid and had to hire help privately.

Getting adequate help was not easy and it was expensive. The first person I hired was terrific but she became injured and could not return. I then went through an agency but that also was difficult as I was all the way out on the North Fork in the town of Orient where there is a severe home care workforce shortage. Home care workers would have to drive a long distance and they weren't compensated for either time or gas money. That second worker lasted two weeks until she got a job closer to home and left me. The system of not paying workers for travel time and gas is unfair and if addressed would serve communities where there is a shortage. As an employer, I want to do the right thing and pay a living wage of \$15 dollars an hour, but as I age I worry that I can't afford it and will risk losing the right to age in my home with dignity.

**I was delighted to hear that the state is prioritizing workforce development in this year's budget, but appalled to learn that home care is not included! I urge the Legislature to correct this wrong by funding the Home Care Workforce Innovation Fund, which Allison will discuss in her testimony.**

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story with you today. I believe that everyone should have the right to healthcare, home care, a living wage, the ability to age in place with dignity. On behalf of the Caring Majority, I applaud your efforts to protect workers and transform New York into a more caring place to live.