



NEW YORK CARING MAJORITY  
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**Testimony before the Joint Legislative Hearing**  
**Economic Development Budget**

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Member of the NY Caring Majority & Statewide Senior Action Council**

My name is Kelly McMullen. I am the recently retired Director of the Ulster County Office for the Aging.

I am here representing Statewide Senior Action Council and New York Caring Majority, a campaign of seniors, people with disabilities, family caregivers and direct care workers. We are working to win affordable access to long term care services and supports for all who need it, and to improve pay and conditions for workers in the direct care workforce.

Thank you for hearing my testimony. I am the daughter of parents who are 86 and 90 years old. I have learned much about the status of home care in these roles. I am retired now but active in advocating that elected representatives, seniors and their families understand the real life conditions relative to this issue. I am passionate about this because home care can make the difference between a life of dignity or suffering. As OFA Director, we could not fill EISEP funded home care hours due to a lack of workers. This was a chronic situation and heart breaking because in many cases, even as little as four hours a week of home care can preserve a senior's ability to remain in their home (avoiding unnecessary hospitalization or institutionalization).

I watched this happen with my own parents who, even though of means, with a daughter with my experience and two others who are registered nurses, were forced to give up their home and move to assisted living because we could not put together a schedule of reliable workers to meet their needs.

Wages and work conditions that must be adjusted to be in alignment with both the nature of the work and the needs of the burgeoning senior community.

Additionally, according to recent data from Suburban Stats, New York has over 26 million households with at least one person over the age of 60. This means that families, many with working family members, are caring for both a child and an aging adult.



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Across the country, people are living longer than ever, with 10,000 baby boomers turning 65 each day. The situation in the Hudson Valley is no different. According to the Mid Hudson Valley Community Profiles Project, "All counties in the region are experiencing the "graying" phenomenon affecting much of the country. The population over the age of 60 has been growing the fastest, while the population under 40 has been shrinking. Since 2000, the 85 and over age group grew the fastest, at 58% for Dutchess, 53% for Ulster and 48% for the region overall."

In 2014, there were over 325,000 home care aides in New York State, including home health aides and personal care aides. That is expected to grow by almost 125,000 by 2024 – a growth of 38 percent. Further, this workforce is comprised of a population that benefits greatly from workforce development. Over 90 percent are female. Approximately 78 percent of home care workers are people of color. Fifty six percent have a high school diploma or less. And 67 percent of the workforce were not born in the U.S. In other words, these jobs are available to (and the workforce is largely comprised of) workers who have been historically marginalized and are especially in need of workforce development investments.

Finally, workforce development investments are especially important for this occupation because we are facing a workforce shortage in most areas of the state. As the demand for home care workers is increasing, the number of adults in the typical caregiving age — people between age 25 and 64 — will slightly decrease. This means that over the next few decades, as the young-old ratio shrinks, New York will have fewer workers to support a growing number of older adults. Investing in home care aide workforce development would help improve recruitment and retention of workers, and decrease the workforce shortage.

Without investing significantly in the growth of the home care workforce, we will have no solution to how to support our aging New Yorkers to age in place with dignity. I encourage you to work with us, and find ways to use economic development dollars to improve and sustainably grow the home care workforce in New York State.