

**We are the Caring Majority and we are requesting your support
for the
Fair Pay for Home Care Act**

My name is Arlene Sandra Abramson and I am a senior living alone in New York City. In 2006, it became increasingly clear that my partner, Terry DeFiore, (later to become my wife in 2011 when we were permitted to marry in New York State) was having increasing physical, psychological and emotional difficulty with day-to-day activities. She was losing her balance and falling. She would break into laughter at inappropriate times. She, who had been able to problem solve with ease, was continually making errors in judgment. It took us nearly 3 years to learn that she had Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP), a degenerative neurological disease that would render her progressively incapable of caring for herself.

Thankfully, Terry had been able to get long-term care insurance and we were able to have 24-hour in-home care for her for more than 4 years. Through the insurance, we were able to pay her caregivers a living wage of \$18/hour and she was able to live at home with trained wonderful caregivers until she died at home in 2013.

However, that is not what most caregivers receive. Because of the low pay, home care workers are leaving the workforce in droves right when we need them most — forcing many seniors to live in dangerous nursing homes instead of receiving care at home. As New York faces an economic recession and a global pandemic, we need to create new jobs and stave off widespread unemployment. If the state starts paying home care workers a living wage, these jobs will be filled immediately — because of the high demand.

Home care workers are also primarily women of color and immigrants — communities that are historically underpaid and deserve full wages and benefits: 91% are women, 77% are people of color, and 60% are

immigrants. Over 500,000 families use home care in the state — and that number will only grow as our state continues to age.

As we have learned during the Covid pandemic, seniors and people with disabilities are safer when they remain at home. New York state **MUST** increase its trained homecare workforce to provide its residents the care they need. The Fair Pay for Homecare Act is the way to accomplish this.

We call on the state to enact the Fair Pay for Homecare Act and take care of our most vulnerable residents and workers.

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