



James Westgate, Nursing Home Worker
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February 14, 2024

Subject: In Support of House Bill H-7171

To the Members of the House Committee on Labor,

My name is James Westgate. I'm reaching out to share my story and why I really believe in what House Bill H-7171 is trying to do. About four years back, when the world was upside down because of the pandemic, my grandmother had a stroke. It hit us hard. She was the one who kept our family going, especially when it came to money matters. Suddenly, my grandfather, who's about the same age, had to step up big time. And me? I had to juggle work and help out with bills and all, a job my grandmother used to handle like a pro.

It was tough. Not just on me, but on my grandfather too. He was there all day with her, and I could see it was wearing on him. But what choice did we have? On top of this, I've got a brother with autism. He's a great guy but needs extra care, and he couldn't work. So, you can imagine, it felt like we were carrying a mountain on our shoulders.

Back when my grandmother first got sick, I wished I could have taken more time off work to help out, to give my grandfather a break, to be there for my grandmother and brother. But there was no way I could afford to lose my pay. And back then, grandparents weren't even covered by the TCI program. If this bill had been around, it would've been a game-changer for us.

So, here's why I'm asking you, from the bottom of my heart, to please pass this bill. It's not just about the money; it's about giving folks like me a chance to do right by our families without losing everything. It's about giving us a bit of breathing room when life throws a curveball.

I know if we had something like this when my grandmother got sick, it would've made a world of difference. And I know there are a lot of families out there right now who are in the same boat we were, feeling stuck and overwhelmed. This bill could really help them out.

Thanks for listening to what I have to say. It means a lot to have the chance to share my story and to know that there are people like you who can make things better for families like mine.

Take care,

James Westgate