



## **Talking Points 4 Fair Pay for Home Care**

The tragic deaths of nearly 8,000 nursing home residents in New York from COVID-19 has exposed the dangerous conditions of nursing homes that existed before the pandemic. If we are serious about keeping seniors and people with disabilities safe, we must overhaul our long-term care system to prioritize community-based services and end institutionalization.

- New York is the epicenter of a national home care worker shortage with a projected shortage of 50,000 workers by 2023, and over 83,000 by 2025. This shortage means tens of thousands of New Yorkers are currently at-risk because they cannot receive the services they need to live a high quality life in the community, with hundreds of thousands more on the brink of disaster.
- Low wages are the reason for this crisis. In 2006, home care workers earned about 150% of the state minimum wage on average. Today, almost all home care workers are paid the minimum wage or slightly above, earning dollars less per hour than fast food and retail employees. Reimbursement rates must be increased so that home care workers are paid 150% of the minimum wage and do not fall behind other industries again.
- The Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v L.C. (by Zimring)* requires the state to provide access to community-based supports and services. With more people needing home care services and fewer workers to provide them that access is gone, and puts the state out of compliance with this civil rights decision.
- Investing in the home care workforce benefits local economies. Countless studies have shown that spending economic development money of low-wage workers is the most effective way to rejuvenate local economies, as they will spend their wages at local businesses, reinvesting those dollars in economically at-risk communities.
- Assemblymember Richard Gottfried and Senator Rachel May will soon introduce legislation requiring investments in home care and CDPA so workers will make 150% of the minimum wage, and agencies will be assured adequate reimbursement to pay it.
- To learn the lessons COVID-19 is teaching, we must rebuild our long-term care system to prioritize community based services like CDPA and end forced institutionalization. To do this, home care workers need to be paid 150% of the regional minimum wage so that they can afford to continue to perform rewarding work and provide for their families, and new workers are incentivized to join this industry.

**ASK: Will you co-sponsor legislation that requires home care workers be paid 150% of the regional minimum wage to ensure that seniors and people with disabilities have access to community based care?**