



February 15, 2023

Senator Jim Abeler
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2207
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Abeler:

Jamie Gulley
President

On behalf of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, I write to express our support for S.F. 1597 which would allow PCAs to be compensated for driving their clients.

Jigme Ugen
Executive Vice President

Our union represents almost 50,000 healthcare workers in Minnesota, including hospital, clinic, nursing home, and self-directed homecare workers. This is an important issue for our self-directed homecare workers who provide PCA services. Our members want to help their clients live full independent lives in their own homes. To live such full independent lives, clients often need help transporting themselves by car. PCAs are very often the best person to drive their client, but current law unnecessarily prevents them from being paid for their work. It is wasteful and needlessly complicated to compel a homecare client to hire a third party to drive them and their PCA on errands or other trips.

Phillip Cryan
Executive Vice President

Brenda Hilbrich
Executive Vice President

Rasha Ahmad Sharif
Executive Vice President

Gail Larson is a PCA and a member of our union. She told me, "It would be very valuable to be able to drive my client to work, on errands, or for a medical appointment, so that neither of us would struggle with Metro Mobility, which often requires a 90 minute wait time for pick up or drop off." She added that many clients struggle with long bus rides because of bladder issues. Car rides are not just a matter of convenience, but also of basic dignity. Gail concluded "my client needs me on trips, whether it is to carry items they can't or to take notes about medical instructions, so, if I already need to go on the trip, why not pay me to drive?"

S.F. 1597 is a good idea whose time is well past due.

Sincerely yours,

Rick Varco
Political Director

345 Randolph Avenue
Suite 100
St. Paul, MN
55102

RV:klh/opeiu#12

651.294.8100
800.828.0206
(fax) 651.294.8200
www.seiuhcmnia.org