

Co-Chairs, members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Maria Salome Belman and I am a Personal Support Worker in Salem, OR. I have worked as a care provider for three years. I am here today to ask you to prioritize funding that supports the care workers who have masked up and shown up to work throughout this entire pandemic, to keep people safe and healthy.

In 2020 our lives changed and being impacted by COVID-19 was a nightmare. I suffer a lot because my son tested positive for COVID-10 and all my family had to go into quarantine. I had to stop working for a month and it happened right as the Oregon forest fires hit. Having to be hit twice, with a family member that tested positive and the lack of Oxygen in the air was difficult. When I completed the quarantine, I called my employer and told her that I was ready to go back to work but she asked that I bring her a doctors medical report saying that I was safe to go back to work. I was so worried about everything. I had no money to buy personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer. I remember calling everywhere, doing the impossible, to come back to normal life but I still faced many barriers. I think that it is going to be more than a year for everyone to feel safe or to go "back to normal" so I ask that you invest in Essential Worker Pay. Essential workers like me have kept Oregon safe and with your support, you are helping workers like me make ends meet and showing us the respect for keeping our state going throughout the pandemic.

Thank you for your time and for reading my testimony.

Sincerely,

Maria Salome Belman  
Salem, OR