

Dear Senator Ingebrigtsen and Representative Franson:

I am one of many adult foster care workers, defined by Minnesota Statutes 245D.02, subdivision 6A. I am hoping that the new Frontline Worker Pay Working Group will add our job to the list of frontline workers eligible for financial assistance.

I have served in-patient adult foster care clients for many years. It is never an easy job. Our clients have serious issues from autism to major mental health disorders. But the pandemic has made it even more difficult. Staff shortages have increased the hours and our workload. Constant social distancing and constantly screening clients and staff every time they leave and return adds to the complexity and stress.

The demands and responsibilities of the job and low pay make it difficult to maintain staffing levels. Our clients have special needs and complicated meds, which we have to administer. I am pleased that on May 2, 2021 my fellow co-workers and I received a raise. I went from making \$12.65 to \$13.85. Although very much appreciated, the raise does not make this living wage.

The pandemic has definitely made our job more difficult and staff levels worse. It is difficult to get staff and keep them at these wages. As a result we end up very short staffed. I have personally worked thirty-two days in succession. Often times I've put in 86 hours in a 7-day stretch. Actually, one of our company's foster care homes experienced the first Covid death in Douglas County. Every shift posed some risk for all of us.

I know that a small payment for the frontline worker fund can't solve our problems. But every bit does help. And being acknowledged as an essential part of the state's care system helps too.

I hope you can urge the Working Group to consider our situation. We have no union or trade association to make our case.

Thank you very much for your help and concern,

Linda Fahlin
Garfield, Mn.