

**Human Services Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

Bill No: SB-498 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT PROTECTING PAYCHECKS FOR PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS
Title: AND EXPANDING PUBLIC ACCESS TO STATE PROGRAMS.

Vote Date: 3/19/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/17/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill seeks to implement safeguards for personal care attendants (PCAs) working in self-directed home care programs. The legislation also looks to make communication more accessible by state agencies and private contracted organizations, as it would improve reporting processes, namely involving payment inquiries (nonpayment, missing checks, etc.). Proponents of SB 498, including families, PCAs, consumers, neighbors, and friends alike, support addressing the thousands of outstanding grievances. Their bottom-line request is to feel respected, be heard, and receive the support the workforce deserves.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Connecticut Department of Social Services, Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner: agrees with FI-enrolled participants who expect accessibility, responsiveness, accuracy, and high performance out of its services. DSS, however, raises a number of concerns, including restrictions on amending performance measures, risks of misinterpreting data, the potential to end self-direction services, and the need for additional staff resources. DSS believed Sections 4-6 impose contractual terms that would be better suited to negotiations within the procurement process.

Connecticut Department of Administrative Services, Michelle Gilman, Commissioner: Expresses significant concerns that Section 6 goes far beyond federal requirements. DAS finds that requiring agencies and contractors to translate all communications into designated languages could cause “substantial staffing, operational, and financial burdens.”

Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services, Amy Porter, Commissioner: cautions that having performance data made public could result in the FI withdrawing from contracts. Ms. Porter says the Department currently works with sister state agencies that engage in ongoing performance improvement reviews with the FI.

Connecticut Department of Developmental Services, Jordan Scheff, Commissioner: notes that they do not have the existing staff capacity or resources to meet additional reporting assignments and remain concerned over publicly posting information required by SB 498.

Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Joshua Wojcik, Acting Secretary: Shares that Section 2's proposed model would undermine the foundation of self-directed services in CT, therefore risking the state being a joint employer and further financial implications. OPM is looking to ensure the stability of self-directed PCA services.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

SEIU Healthcare, Kevin Alexander, Personal Care Attendant: Testifies in support of SB 498, advocating for additional consideration of mileage reimbursement and full pay. Mr. Alexander's argument sheds light on the personal care attendant workforce's needs, their overlooked value on consumers, and the need for reevaluating the treatment of caregivers.

SEIU Healthcare, Chris Butler, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Tamir Capehart, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Kara O'Dwyer, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU 1199, Member, Dominic Cotton:

Susan Beck: This group (of PCAs, trainers, and mothers) refers to times where GTI dropped the ball, so to speak, failing to provide payment and reimbursement for worker visits, paratransit services, cleaning services, YMCA memberships, and more. They consider these unfortunate, outstanding incidents that have yet to be resolved, suggesting this could be avoided by creating a responsive payroll system that accounts for errors, flags issues, addresses debts/gaps in pay, and notifies stakeholders of interruptions.

Home Care Association of America, Marlene Chickerella, President:

SEIU Healthcare, Leticia Council, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Jordan DeAngelo, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Dale Elliot, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Cynthia Johnson, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Jachelle Johnson, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Tenisha Joyner, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Maria Kelley, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Latia Maldonado, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Amy Martin, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Lyndon Pitter, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Jonathan Stakley, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Anthony Thomas, Personal Care Attendant:

SEIU Healthcare, Eric Wegner-Vincent, Personal Care Attendant:
SEIU Healthcare, Terrell Williams, Personal Care Attendant:
SEIU Healthcare, Tiffany Williams, Personal Care Attendant:
Connecticut AFL-CIO, Ed Hawthorne, President:
Comunidades Sin Fronteras, Carmen Lanche, Executive Director:
The Arc Connecticut, Danielle Middlebrooks, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy:
Douglas Kerr, Payroll Director:
Dale Osterman, Personal Care Attendant:
Dawn Osterman, Personal Care Attendant:

There is strong support for the caregiver workforce, which “performs difficult and often underappreciated work.” It is noted that PCAs tend to be financially vulnerable and live paycheck to paycheck, which is echoed by workers/families themselves, emphasizing the loss of even one missing stipend. PCAs mention showing up regardless, despite pay-related concerns, working multiple jobs, or not having hours approved. The consensus is that as reimbursement rates remain low, employment, wages, and benefits will weaken, contributing to further uncertainties.

SEIU Healthcare, Diedre Murch, Home Care Director & Vice President:
SEIU Connecticut State Council, Stacey Zimmerman, Deputy Director: support the bill, noting that the state and DDS have just begun partially mailing backpay checks. Although the work is ongoing, they add that hundreds of PCAs, who undergo so much risk in their profession, are still awaiting action on years' worth of “payroll nightmare.”

Faith Power Assembly, Terence Brown, Elder:
St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, Denise Welsh, Junior Warden: Calls out problems at the staffing level, reciting one problem with aging friends working through retirement, and lacking sufficient time to take care of herself. One labels the system “broken” and vouches for workers, like her, who he knows struggle in the business.

Faith Power Assembly, Samuel Saylor, Pastor: Supports the bill, as it would add respect to the role of PCAs in Connecticut. Mr. Saylor argues that these workers are not being valued enough – evident in payroll discrepancies, traumatizing predicaments, and threats to consumer care.

Connecticut Community Party, Joelle Fishman, Chair: Suggests that a poor transition, from Allied Community Resources to the current Fiscal Intermediary FTI, generated the problems we see today. Mr. Fishman attributes the inability to make timely payments to their being a private, for-profit contractor.

SEIU Healthcare, Cheryl Fortson, Consumer:
Anonymous: Recount problems with Fiscal Intermediary (FI) communications, including staff waiting on hold, disregard for returning phone calls, revealing confidential information, failing to account for mileage reimbursement or union wage increases, and lacking paperwork to substantiate claims. In extreme cases, one PCA recalls waiting months to receive repayment and notice to file for redetermination, which led to a lifetime of changes and impacts.

MBraces, Pradipta Mazumder, Orthodontist: Supports the bill, arguing that Medicaid should increase its reimbursement rates to keep up with inflation and increased costs.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

GT Independence, Pearl Barnett, President & COO:

GT Independence, John Carmichael, CEO: Oppose the bill, claiming that protecting workers and participants is best achieved when stabilizing the system. They find that, as currently drafted, SB 498 may “unintentionally destabilize program operations” and set aside system infrastructure, policy guidance, data flow, and clear communication.

Reported by: Zachary Robinson

Date: April 2, 2026