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Dori Harrington
Licensed Practical Nurse

Good Morning Senator Kushner, Senator Lesser, Representative Porter, Representative Scanlon and members of the hosting Committees, my name is Dori Harrington and I am speaking before you today in support of the establishment of a workman's compensation presumption for COVID-19 in the state of Connecticut.

I am a Licensed Practical Nurse at Parkville nursing home in Hartford, CT. Next month I will have been working at Parkville for 13 years. My job is not an easy one, it is difficult and demanding work. On my unit there are 29 patients that I care for. Several of whom are high acuity patients who require a lot of attention. Many shifts are non-stop, but this is the work I was meant to do. I am a caretaker; it is who I am.

When the COVID outbreak first began my coworkers and I were given a limited supply of surgical masks, googles, and gowns and told to reuse them. This was despite the fact that we were caring for individuals who had tested positive for COVID. I took extra precautions outside of work to protect myself and my family from COVID. I stayed home, only leaving the house for groceries and gas. My teenage children stopped working and socializing, and stayed home.

Around Easter is when I first became symptomatic, experiencing horrible body aches that would keep me awake at night. I was tested for COVID on April 16th but it came back negative. The symptoms worsened over the weekend and into the following week, to the point where I had to call out of work. It was a week later, on April 23rd, when my second test came back positive.

My experience with COVID was incredibly difficult. For the first few weeks after my positive test I dealt with all the common side effects of the virus. Specifically struggling with horrible migraines and a debilitating fatigue. Eventually many of the symptoms faded, although the coughing and fatigue lingered.

While at home self-quarantining, I quickly burned through the two personal days and minimal hours of PTO that I had. This is when I learned that I could receive up to two weeks of PTO from my job, however, I would then owe them those hours. Having no other choice, I accepted this and for the next two years I will be repaying them. The additional PTO was still not enough, and I was soon forced to deplete the savings I had so diligently built. In total I was out of work, self-quarantining, for five weeks.

During that time, I learned of the possibility that workman's compensation would help to restore some of the wages that I had lost during my missed time. To me this made a lot of sense, because there is no doubt in my mind that I contracted COVID while at work. With

the help of my union District 1199 I applied for workman's comp through the state of Connecticut. Before I could even send in all the information requested by the state, I received a document telling me my claim had been denied on the grounds that my "Covid-19 injury (was) not distinctively associated with nor peculiar to the employee's occupation as a LPN such that there is a direct casual connection between the duties of the employment and the disease contracted". This felt incredibly disrespectful to me. How could they tell me there was no connection to my duties, when my duties were to care for COVID positive individuals with substandard PPE?

I am not alone, hundreds of workers across the state are in dire need of aid. All we did was continue to do our jobs. We did this despite the risk to ourselves because it is what our communities needed us to do. Please do not abandon us when we need you. Thank you.