



May 5, 2026

Subject: Testimony in Support of S-2882 – Supporting Self-Directed Care and Direct Support Professionals, Submitted by a Member of SEIU 1199NE

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services:

My name is Julia Cusack. I am a daughter, sister, student, artist, friend, and partner. I am also a caregiver. I care for my mother, who became ill in 2017 and has been diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer.

S-2882 would extend the right to organize to more caregivers, and I strongly support it.

Family caregivers like me provide full-time care to our loved ones through programs like the Personal Choice Program. Many of us have recently gained the right to organize and advocate for fair wages and working conditions. It is time to extend that same right to others doing this same essential work in the developmental disabilities system.

As caregivers, we work day in and day out without the support or recognition we need. We give up careers, education, and other opportunities to care for the people we love. These are sacrifices we make willingly, but they are not sustainable without support. We are still human, and we need support too.

We provide vital care—often without formal training, time off, or resources. For many of us, this is a full-time responsibility. Some of our loved ones require care around the clock, and without a strong support system, that level of responsibility is exhausting and overwhelming.

It is easy to describe caregiving in terms of tasks—feeding, bathing, managing medications—but it is harder to talk about the emotional reality. The grief. The exhaustion. Caring for a loved one with a serious illness is deeply personal and incredibly difficult. Asking for help can feel like failure, but it is not. Recognizing the need for support is part of being able to continue providing care.

By giving more caregivers the ability to organize, S-2882 helps ensure that we can advocate for the support we need—and that our loved ones receive the high-quality care they deserve. When caregivers are supported, families are stronger, care is more stable, and everyone benefits.

I urge you to support S-2882.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Julia Cusack,
Personal Care Attendant