

# Public Comment

Item #15  
12/12/2023

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**From:** LGBTQ Fresno <jason@lgbtcn.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2023 11:10 PM  
**To:** District 4; Clerk/BOS  
**Subject:** Stand up for ALL parents reject censorship, vote NO

**CAUTION!!! - EXTERNAL EMAIL - THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK**

Dear Supervisor Mendes,

I am contacting you in opposition to the "Parents Matter Act" Resolution to review and sequester children's books and other materials available through the Fresno County Public Library system. Item #24 on the November 28th 2023 meeting.

The proposed ordinance would take away the rights from many parents in our community by limiting what is available in public libraries. It would also make the county, not parents, the ultimate arbiter on library materials.

I trust our trained library staff, and you should as well. The library does not carry obscene materials or make them available to young readers. The policies in the proposed ordinance are poorly defined and overly burdensome and expensive; the county will need to hire extra staff to implement and enforce them. The county may also open itself up to a costly lawsuit if the policy goes into effect and members of the community sue because they don't think their children have been protected or that their rights have been violated. It is undemocratic to have eleven unelected, appointed people are being chosen to determine the moral standard for the entirety of Fresno County.

The newly released appeal process is an appeal back to the SAME board that made the decision.

The policy is both unwanted and unneeded. Please support the rights of parents and children in our community by voting against it.

Thank you

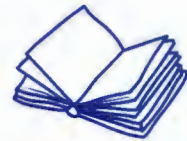
-- Mark Tewson  
mark.tewson@yahoo.com

**seiu** 2015  
California's Long Term Caregivers

# FRESNO

## STORIES

The booklet depicts the struggles faced by IHSS Providers in Fresno County, who dedicate themselves to caregiving but encounter financial hardships and lack of healthcare coverage, highlighting the need for support and reform.

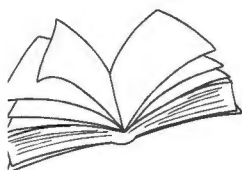




To the Board of Supervisors: Please acknowledge that these stories depict the reality of care providers in your county. They play a vital role in ensuring our community's peace of mind. As our neighbors and your constituents, they deserve a contract that adequately addresses the problems of low wages and healthcare coverage.

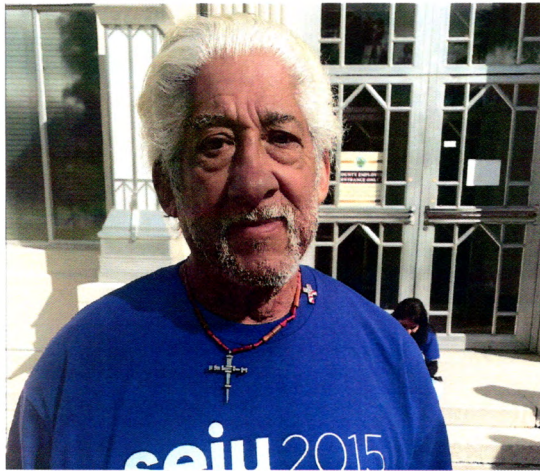
### **Facts about care workers in Fresno County**

- **Are working multiple jobs:** 80.7% of IHSS providers in Fresno County reported working multiple jobs – at least some of the time – just to make ends meet. That's nearly 4 out of every 5 provider's in the county.
- **Food insecurity:** 42.3% of IHSS providers in Fresno County experience consistent food insecurity, relying on CalFresh and/or food banks at least monthly.
- **Transportation insecurity:** 84.8% of IHSS providers in Fresno County who have cars miss regular maintenance on their car because it is too expensive.
- **Housing disparity:** 53.5% of IHSS providers in Fresno County have difficulty paying their mortgage or rent each month, with many reporting that they are sometimes or always late with their payments.
  - 59.2% of those we surveyed spend at least 50% of their income on housing, and 19.3% spend more than 75%.
- **Healthcare disparity:** 55.7% of IHSS providers in Fresno County are sometimes or often unable to access medication because they cannot afford the cost of prescriptions..
- **Nearly a million** authorized care hours went unused in Fresno County, indicating thousands of people had difficulty finding care.
- Thus creating a shortage of care providers because the wages are so low, they leave caregivers on the brink of poverty.
- We need a contract with better wages and benefits to attract and retain the workforce Fresno needs.





## Henry Espinoza: *Financial Oppression is Real..*



I have been an IHSS care provider since April 2023. I take care of a long time friend, Mark Bandy.

Mark and I have been going to the same congregation for many years. I found myself helping him in my free time and eventually finding myself always there at his house. His nephew used to be his caretaker but suddenly passed away and found himself with no other family members willing to take

care of him. Mark asked me to be his care provider as he understood it would take me away from earning income elsewhere. \$16.10 an hour isn't the best and it really doesn't allow me to provide the quality care that Mark deserves.

I worked as an automotive technician specializing in Classic cars for about 18 years. I earned more than \$16.10 an hour and I know in the years of working in labor I have seen everything go up; and I know that what we are currently getting paid is not sufficient for us to provide food on the table and to keep going as a care provider.

Financial oppression is real, we couldn't take care of our sister in law because we could not afford our expenses with IHSS income alone. I am getting older and I find myself wondering if there will be providers left with what they are getting paid.

I care about Mark, and I know he appreciates what I can provide for him as a caregiver but with everything going up I'm afraid I might not be able to give him the care he needs. I am urging the Fresno board of Supervisors to give us the same compassion that we show our clients. .15 cents with no Healthcare is not enough.

Henry Espinoza  
Nathan Magsig

**Pa Moua: *Becoming a Provider was not a Choice, but a Filial Responsibility***



I have been a care provider for IHSS for about 5 years now and am currently taking care of both my Mother In-Law and Father In-law. They are both considered Clients as I do not live with them.

My father in-law has a heart condition that requires constant care. My mother in law had a stroke and is very limited to what she can do. Some of the care that I provide are Cooking due to diet restriction, meal prepping, heaving

lifting, assisting moving around the home, hygiene, medication, and so much more that I can't list it all here. Before taking care of my in-laws I worked for Pelco for 15 years until they closed down. I could've taken a job elsewhere but found myself responsible to care for my in-laws. As a daughter in-law I could not refuse to take care of them as, in our culture, it would be unacceptable. I did what I believe was required of me and took the job.

\$16.10 isn't enough for the work and time we put in. I have to drive to their house daily to provide the care they need in order for them to live their days with dignity and respect but at a cost. Luckily I have my spouse to help support wherever I am short when it comes to our expenses. But what happens if he is no longer here?

What I am afraid of the most is the possibility that I may need this in the future and my husband having to leave his work to take care of me and my in-laws. What would my family do then? What will happen to my children? I want to build a path for myself and my loved ones so they don't have to worry about these things. I ask the board of supervisors to do the same and uplift workers wages and benefits so that those who come after me can comfortably work in this job.

Pa Moua

Sal Quintero

**Rita Flores: *Patient care is first and it won't happen if we don't have providers***



I have been a provider for 5 Years now. I used to be a Non-Family Provider for a friend who eventually went into a convalescent home as her care required more than what I could give her.

I am not a family care provider. My first family patient was my son Jessy Richard Garcia who passed away recently this year. I am not taking care of my Nephew Mike Torres who has

mental disabilities.

Prior to being a provider I worked for the Fresno School district for 27 years. I worked in the cafeteria then became a Janitor towards the end. I'm retired and was not looking to provide care but it fell into my lap. I've come to realize that we can't survive off of \$16.10 alone. Many of us have to work more than one job to be able to pay our expenses.

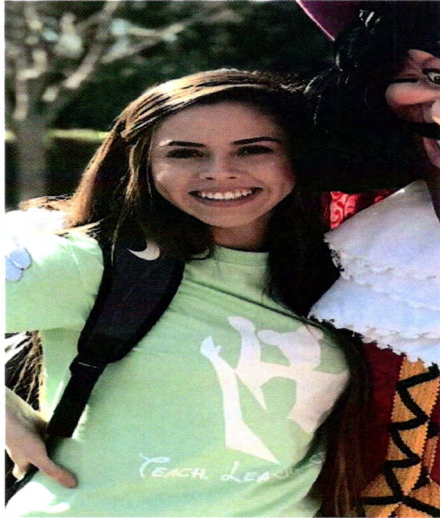
I'm afraid that with the rate that the Board of supervisors are giving us, \$1.00 offers with no benefits, we might be losing more providers to Mcdonalds and other work.

What will happen to our recipients? What will happen if I need IHSS in the future, who's going to take care of me and stay in this work? I am asking the Board of Supervisors to stop keeping us at poverty wages and uplift workers by creating a job that is competitive. Keep workers in the job to provide care for those who really need it.

Rita Flores  
Nathan Magsig



**Yohana: *How can you take care of someone when you aren't taken care of yourself***



I just recently became a provider a month ago. I used to be a patient transporter for Saint Agnes Hospital for about a year, since it is inline with my career path.

I am a family care provider. I provide services to my aunt because I was the only one willing to do so with the wage provided. I will soon provide care for others in my family.

I had to stop my passion to become a care provider, which is to be more involved in the healthcare field. While the job is healthcare, the money provided isn't sustainable so I've had to apply for a second job. The amount of hours I have to put in just to live and make sure my client is taken care of takes most of my time away from anything else I would like to do. Even passion projects, such as offering my services on care.com and helping out my local community have become non-existent, primarily because of the low wages offered by the IHSS program.

I'm afraid of the offer the Fresno County Board of Supervisors has on the table. A dollar wage increase and no healthcare benefits would be a nightmare for others. I, personally, already struggle with anxiety and depression which I take medication for. This job is literally maintaining someone's entire life, so it is inherently stressful. The thought of losing healthcare benefits for me would be devastating.

As a young person, I know I am a minority in this program. The job just isn't attractive but I do it because the client needs me, and without me, who? Though, with the cost of living increasing, it's becoming increasingly difficult to stay afloat. I am asking the Board of Supervisors to ensure this program is given the wages and benefits it deserves, because the clients deserve a strong program.

**Yohana / Nathan Magsig**

## Naomi: *The Sacrifices We Make*



I was approved as a provider for IHSS as of January of this year. I am a family care provider, and have been taking care of my mother for many years now before I knew there was a program for it.

My mother is a cancer survivor, and has also been diagnosed with dementia. The care she needs is long and difficult, but I do it to make sure she has dignity and can live in her own home. A nursing home just wouldn't be able to provide the same care; One person and individual attention is much better than one person caring for 5 people at a time.

I know this because before IHSS, I was a residential manager for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. I know how much care each person needs to live a good life. Though, due to my mother's worsening condition I had to stop my career and my passion in order to make sure she gets that same care to live a good life. I had to bake the cake and eat it too, so to speak.

The current wages are not enough to get through life. Inflation has impacted my daily finances drastically, and since my mother needs so much care, I cannot work another job. I have sacrificed so much to make sure my mother is taken care of, I don't wish to sacrifice my own well being.

I am asking the Board of Supervisors to give providers better wages and full healthcare benefits. As someone who has worked throughout the healthcare field their entire life, I see the need and how important this program is. If the program is left with low wages and no benefits, no one will want to be a provider and then what happens to the clients? Who cares for them? What example is Fresno County showing the world? Fresno County, please support the IHSS program and uplift people out of poverty.

**Naomi / Nathan Magsig**



***William: As a veteran, I know what service looks like, and Fresno County isn't showing it.***



Hello to whom it may concern, my name is William Peterson, and I have been a IHSS caregiver for a couple of years now. I care for my son Jack, who is severely autistic and has a number of developmental disabilities. I wanted to be able to give him the best life possible, so I decided to move to the foothills of Fresno County.

Jack does have some complications. Simply getting him off the school bus turns into a 15 minute exercise in patience. Things such as using the bathroom are very involved procedures.

Before the IHSS program I served in the military as a pararescueman for the United States Air Force. The primary job of a pararescueman is to assist other members in the military with emergency medical capabilities. My primary duty was to serve in its most fundamental capacity. That is what IHSS workers do.

How is it that we, the wealthiest country on earth, can't afford to give healthcare workers a measly 20\$ an hour and health insurance. This job is very important, not just for family providers but others. People deserve to be able to live in their own homes with dignity without going into a nursing home. It really does boggle the mind why this has to be an issue we need to fight for.

The wage increase would help tremendously since everything has increased in price, but this is a moral issue. What message are we sending when we say healthcare workers aren't even worth enough to have healthcare insurance? I am asking the Fresno County Board of Supervisors to take a deep look at who sustains the county. Give IHSS workers the wages they deserve.

**William / Nathan Magsig**

***Janice: Quality care shouldn't come at the detriment of the provider.***



I have been a provider since 2005, on and off through many different means. I take care of my little boy, Jaime, who is nine. He has down syndrome, and has many needs such as a cpap machine, medicine for allergies such as dairy and soy, and assistance with respiratory issues, among other things. Getting him to use something as simple as a cpap machine is difficult. He is non verbal & often runs away.

Before IHSS, I was quality control at an almond facility, in fact I was quality control at many different facilities before. It was my career and I enjoyed it. Before that I used to build large ac units.

The wages the program has given us are definitely not enough; I have started using credit cards to support myself which are getting out of control. I can not pay back what I am buying. My son has a ton of appointments; 6 doctor appointments and 3 therapists weekly. My schedule is almost booked daily with things to maintain my son. Car maintenance is my primary issue with constant driving.

If I didn't have the program I would have to go to work somewhere else, and then Jaime would not make it to his appointments and I would probably lose my job since he's sent home from school so often. Without me or someone else caring for him it would be devastating. Who would take care of him if not me. I make sure I live in the Clovis school district to get the best care possible for children with disabilities. We should be able to give great care to our clients without compromising ourselves. I am asking the board of supervisors to support the program and give us higher wages and better benefits.

**Janice / Nathan Magsig**



***Mary Schulter: Misconceptions ruin what is a fantastic resource for individuals.***



I have been in the IHSS program since 2014. This has been a program that I was always interested in but took out of necessity. Before this program, I was in a bachelors program for Speech language pathology. I had to leave that program to help my mother, and then in turn afterward to help my daughter with down syndrome who has a plethora of health issues, which makes the healthcare insurance so important to me.

I had also previously been trained as a CNA, which also has horrible conditions for its workers. I have effectively worked my entire life since I was able to do so. I took this job because my immediate family needed it and no one was

able to step up to take the responsibility. I actually attempted to get back into the workforce but no daycare would take my child since she was 14.

It's a shame that a common conception is that IHSS workers are lazy. Most of us took many sacrifices in order to make sure those we care for are safe and secure. My career as a future SLP major was put on hold indefinitely. I have no family to assist. Of course making ends meet is an issue, but It's the disregard for the work we do that hurts the most. We are not drains on society, in fact we are the opposite. Without us who takes care of these folks who need it the most?

Without this program, I would more than likely lose my home. I would then have to rent, which would also be unsustainable since I can't work a regular 9-5 and also take care of my daughter full time. I don't like to think about the bad possibilities, but I would like to think that the work we do will one day become recognized. Fresno County Board of Supervisors, I implore you to help this program, and expand healthcare insurance to all.

**Mary / Nathan Magsig**



***Mark Blodgett: Resilient, but crushed beneath the weight of inequitable healthcare system and an apathetic Board of Supervisors***



I have spent 23 years as an IHSS provider. I take care of a disabled man named Nicholas, who has used a wheelchair since he was a small child. My other care recipient is a disabled woman named Janice, who I have been taking care of for about a year now. Janice went through several other care providers, until she found one that she was able to click with. That someone happened to be me; we've become genuine friends.

I got my start as a caregiver when I first began taking care of my grandparents, decades ago. My grandmother had dementia, and my grandfather had diabetes and needed to use a catheter. I would cook, clean, and run errands for

them. That's how I fell in love with caregiving and knew that it was my calling. I pride myself on being able to connect with my recipients and intuitively understanding what it is that they need from me, be it physically or emotionally.

I am 62. Frankly, medical care is too expensive — especially since I don't make a whole lot — but I need it at this age. Sad thing is, it would cost me almost \$200 a month to get better dental insurance. Cost of living is going up and going up, but they don't want to give us a raise? We caregivers need adequate healthcare and wages we can survive on.

This is why me and other home care providers in Fresno County are asking the Board of Supervisors to refrain from eliminating their healthcare. Board members say that they want everyone to be covered...but their "solution" is to continue to pay poverty wages, eliminate the healthcare provided in the IHSS contract, and push IHSS providers onto gov't assistance: the Medi-Cal system.

Mark Blodgett

***Wendy Davenport: Determined, but constantly made to push past obstacles set up by an inequitable system***



I have been an IHSS provider in Fresno county for over 10 years. I live with my husband, a maintenance worker and a veteran, and our three children and two grandchildren. We are a tight knit family. I began this profession as a care provider caring for my cousin.

Each day is filled with tough moments. I now care for my recipient Jovonna, who suffers from thyroid issues, resulting in extreme weight and high blood pressure, and a broken hip due to a fall last year outside of her home while exiting my vehicle. Understandably, Jovonna also struggles with extreme depression partly because she can hardly move without assistance to and from her wheelchair since the fall. She's been denied numerous times to receive surgery referrals by Medi-Cal due to her weight.

I love my job. I want that to be clear. I wouldn't want to do anything else. But, my current salary doesn't reflect the hard work it takes to do it each day — it's a skillset not many can do. Right now, I have to choose which bill I can skip each month in order to purchase groceries. My job is very rewarding, and it's looked down upon in society.

I've thought about working somewhere else that pays more, that offers health benefits that the Board of Supervisors can't just yank away. I could earn more as a fast food worker or janitor. I don't want to work in fast food, since my heart lies in caregiving, but I can't do my job as a caregiver if I don't have the health benefits to keep me well enough to do my job. The stakes are so high here. It's life or death for so many of us caregivers.

**Wendy Davenport**

**Steve Brandau**



***Eladia Pizarro: We should be taking a step forward not a step back!***



I have been working 23 years as an IHSS provider providing care to Oscar Gonzales who is 90 years old. Oscar has Dementia and requires constant supervision and medication. I have been working in this field for many years and have seen how underpaid and unappreciated the work I do is from the Board of Supervisors in Fresno County. Hearing that .15 is what I deserve after 23 years as a care provider is upsetting. I am fighting for \$20 to uplift homecare workers financially and mentally. \$20 would help me know that when I go home after work I won't have to worry about keeping the light bill on and that I have security in know I have a roof over my head.

I am a recipient of Kaiser Insurance, I especially need the insurance due to my diabetes and high blood pressure medication. Without it I would be losing hundreds of dollars a month. If my Kaiser plan gets cut I would have to depend on going back to depending on government assistance. Why should I have to do that? Why are we taking a step back instead of a step forward? Eventually my children will have to take care of me and they won't have anything to look forward to if we continue down this road.

I am asking the Board of Supervisors to uplift workers like me out of poverty, don't keep us here. Improve the work we do by providing us with a good contract where healthcare is for all and wages are enough for us to be able to survive in this economy.

***Eladia Pizarro***

***Sal Quintero***



***Charlene howdeshell: Medical and Cover CA will not provide me with Immediate care when I need it.***



I have been an IHSS provider for 13 years. I currently am caring for my daughter, Grandson, and Mother. My daughter worked at a pharmacy for years but her health started to get worse and eventually they laid her off. After her layoff she suffered a Stroke. She requires assistance in mobility due to her stroke. My grandson was born with Pediatric Neurodegenerative Disease and my mother has Dementia who requires to be watched 24/7. As you can see, I have 3 recipients who I can't just leave for another job. This also means it's hard for me to have a break. I have looked for other providers to help relieve me from some of this work but they come and go, they see the work

they have to do and never return. It's been a struggle to keep providers which is why I am stuck where I am at.

Though I take care of 3 recipients I am still struggling financially, we have so many bills. \$20 will help me financially so I don't have to continue going to the Food bank just to get food on the table. Providers who come in will be more willing to stay for the work and that means my Daughter, Grandson, and mother can get the good care they deserve.

I am disappointed in the Fresno Board of Supervisors with the offer of .15 cents and canceling health care with Kaiser to save money. I am a Kaiser recipient and I will die if the board of supervisors cut my health care. I need Kaiser health insurance, I can't depend on Medical or Cover CA those policies don't provide immediate care when I need it.

Charlene Howdeshell

Brian Pacheco

***Ivonne Castellanos : “I don’t care what happens to Me but I care what will happen to my daughter when I am no longer here”***



I have been an IHSS provider for 5 years now. I am a provider to my Daughter. She has Autism which requires me to assist her to ensure she can go through the day without any difficulties.

Not only do I provide care for my daughter but I have a second job I have to take because the hours I have for her and the amount of pay isn't sufficient for us to survive off of. I worry daily on how I am going to be able to drive my daughter to her doctor's appointments. It's unfortunate that even though I work 2 jobs I still have to go to Foodbanks to get food on the table. I shouldn't have to live this way, my daughter shouldn't have to experience this with me.

If I am already struggling with what we are currently getting paid, imagine when I am no longer here, who will be willing to stay with my daughter? I don't care what happens to me, but I am more worry for her.

I urge the Board of Supervisors to open your hearts and ears. Stop the injustice that is happening to workers like me. We can't continue to live in poverty. We need to improve this work so that future workers that come are willing to stay. Please do this for all IHSS recipients Sake.

***Ivonne Castellanos***

***Brian Pacheco***



***Maria Oliva: By investing in homecare workers means secure workers who will be willing to care for recipients who need it.***



I have been a caretaker for my Husband for 20 years and now my Son requires care from IHSS.

I have found it hard to find providers to help relieve me. The complaint is that the pay isn't worth their effort to drive out to the home and provide him care. This has left me now having to take care of both my husband and son and unable to work a second job with more pay.

With the current pay from IHSS I can't afford to pay for everything so I have to take side jobs such as driving folks from Mendota to Fresno. This takes me away from the care that needs to be given and also time for

myself.

\$20 would help other workers take interest in taking care of my son. Right now no one wants to take care of my son because of low wages.

I am Pleading with the Board of Supervisors to do better, appreciate the workers by giving us a good contract so that my Son can get the care he deserves. I have Medical insurance but I am a worker who should have rights to good benefits. I shouldn't be stuck depending on the government. We deserve more, I deserve more!

***Maria Oliva***

***Brian Pacheco***



TOGETHER  
**We**  
RISE

