

Protecting Independence and Supporting Virginia Families Starts with Strong Home Care

Why Virginia should include home care workers in collective bargaining rights

Families rely on home care workers so older adults and people with disabilities can live safely and independently at home. As Virginia’s population ages, workforce stability becomes more important.

Collective bargaining offers a structured solution, yet current Senate legislation excludes home care workers paid through Medicaid.

Care Needs Are Growing Across Virginia

- 1 in 5 Virginians is age 60+ — about 1 in 4 outside Northern Virginia.
- Virginians 75+: 7% of population in 2024 → 9% by 2030 → 11% by 2040.
- In Southwest Virginia, 4 in 10 older adults live with a disability.

Essential Work, Low Pay, and Limited Stability

About 28,000 consumer-directed attendants provide home care across Virginia. They are paid through Medicaid at rates set by the General Assembly.

Typical pay vs. What’s needed to afford housing

Based on working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a years and paying no more than 30% of income

- **\$13.88/hr** statewide → **\$33.64/hr needed** for average 2-bedroom apartment
- **\$17.97/hr** in Northern Virginia → **\$37.56/hr needed** for a DC metro area studio

Low wages and instability contribute to turnover that disrupts care relationships.

Workforce Stability Matters for Care Stability

Research shows that when home health aides have a union, retention improves.

What families experience	Workforce challenge	What bargaining supports
Changing caregivers	Difficulty retaining workers	Improved retention
Gaps in care availability	Low wages and instability	Greater workforce stability
Strain on family caregivers	Workforce shortages	More reliable care

Aligning Policy With Virginia’s Public Care Workforce

Home care workers are part of Virginia’s publicly funded care system and should be included in collective bargaining alongside other public employees.

Nine states — **CA, CT, IL, MA, MI, MN, OR, RI, and WA** — already allow public-sector collective bargaining for home care workers.

A Stronger Home Care Workforce Benefits All of Us

- Supports independence for older adults and people with disabilities
- Helps families maintain reliable care arrangements
- Strengthens a workforce serving communities statewide
- Prepares Virginia for growing care needs

By the Numbers

27,000

Virginians receiving support through consumer-directed home care services

75%

Voters supporting home care workers to collectively bargain

Workforce profile

- 88% women
- 66% people of color
- 22% immigrants
- 53% receive public assistance

Including home care workers in collective bargaining helps Virginia meet growing care needs.

