

From: [Jason Beloungy](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Written Comments
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 6:29:28 PM
Attachments: [Workforce Crisis Resolution - Letter of Support \(03-21-23\).docx](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Good Evening,

I had intended to join in person, but will be joining and speaking, virtually. Since I could not be there, I am sending the comments I would have handed out.

Thank you!

Jason

Jason Beloungy, *Executive Director*

Pronouns: he/him/his

Access to Independence

3810 Milwaukee Street

Madison, WI 53714

Direct Line: 608-716-7266

(Fax) 608-242-0383

www.accesstoind.org

Please note that masks are recommended for agency visits and appointments. Access to Independence will provide a free mask to anyone wishing to wear one, and staff members will wear them, if requested. Some agency staff may request visitors or consumers to wear a mask, and one will be provided, if needed.

For questions, please contact us at 608-242-8484, or by email at info@accesstoind.org.

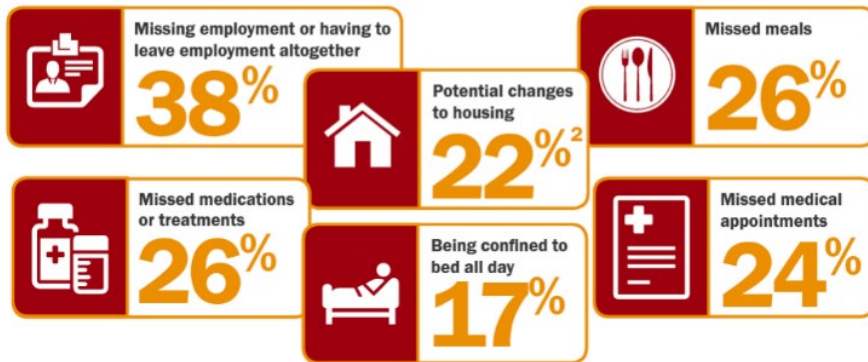
City of Madison Common Council
210 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Council Members,

I am writing in support of Alder Barbara Vedder’s resolution to engage the City of Madison to assist with the worsening personal care workforce crisis. As Executive Director of Access to Independence, as well as someone with experience providing personal cares for people with disabilities, I would like to share my thoughts on this issue, and ways the city could assist with solutions. While this issue is not going to be solved completely by the City of Madison, I believe there are ways for the city to help.

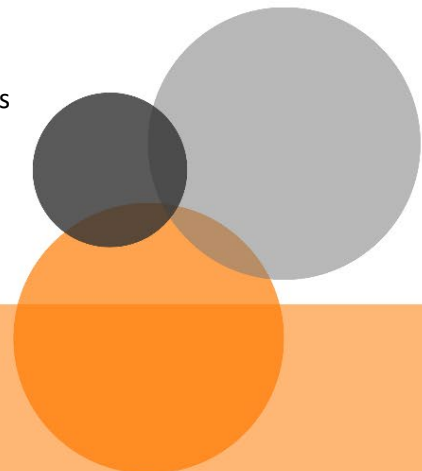
The long-term care workforce crisis has been worsening for several years, and is now at a point that threatens the systems that fund and provide these services, and the freedom and independence of those who rely on them. Even in Madison, often considered to be “resource rich”, there are too many people with disabilities who cannot find workers for some or all of their shifts, providers who cannot find workers to fill shifts for their clients, and families who are providing care to a level that impacts their employment and wellbeing. The bulk of the solution rests with the state and federal government to address the rates paid for these services, as well as other barriers that are driving people away from the workforce. That said, something must be done while we wait on those solutions.

The impact of this crisis is real, and here is a graphic to demonstrate that impact on the lives of people with disabilities across the state of Wisconsin. The graphic is courtesy of the Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations.



None of us should be content knowing so many of our family, friends, and neighbors are not entitled to the same basic rights and opportunities as the rest of us.

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Disability resources,
services, and
advocacy

I believe there are creative ways the City of Madison can support the workforce, and residents who rely on these services. Some ideas might include:

- Development of a local care cooperative to support residents with recruitment, hiring, and orientation of workers; create a pool of backup workers; and develop an information-sharing network. The cooperative could also be explored for providing workers access to benefits offered city employees.
- Local tax incentives for workers, or a sales tax holiday for workers.
- Provide workers access to free transit services, or vouchers for cab rides.

I appreciate Alder Vedder's efforts to involve the city in solutions to this crisis, and believe the support of the Common Council, and leadership of the Disability Rights Commission is important to that effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Beloungy", written over a horizontal line.

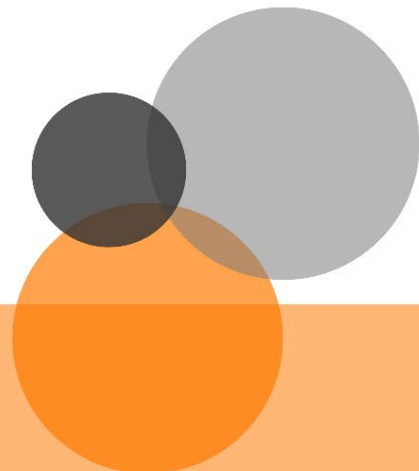
Jason Beloungy, Executive Director
Access to Independence



3810 Milwaukee Street
Madison, WI 53714



www.accesstoind.org
608-242-8484



From: [Melissa Madole](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 76649
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:16:47 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

I was paralyzed 21 years ago in a car accident when I was 19 years old.

For 19 of those years, I have lived independently and able to not only care for myself but my living environment also. Due to aging and secondary injuries, I have slowly been losing my independence.

In 2020 I became eligible to receive assistance in my home. I have someone come a few times a week to clean my floors, go grocery shopping with me, change my bedding and any other random tasks I need to have done. However, I have recently begun looking to hire an assistant for my personal cares such as showering and finding the process difficult to say the least.

I believe the Common Council has the opportunity to do so much good for many people by intervening to not only follow through on these recommendations, but implementing them.

Please consider what options you would want available to you if ever find yourself in a position where you weren't able to live independently.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Melissa Madole

From: [Tracy Miller](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Support for Resolution 76649
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5:10:03 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am writing in support of Resolution 76649 on tonight's agenda. More than forty years ago, I began my career working with people with disabilities as a personal care attendant. In my current work as an Independent Living Specialist, I hear every day about the challenges that people with disabilities face in finding reliable and trustworthy workers to meet their personal care needs. I also hear from family caregivers who have no dependable respite for the care they provide to their loved ones - often 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Over the years, many of these people have become my friends. I could share any number of horror stories about vulnerable people who have been taken advantage of and even abused by personal care workers. For every one of these stories, I could share another about the unique bond that sometimes forms between people with disabilities and workers who value the work experience and dedicate themselves to supporting people to live their best lives. This work is hard, and it deserves better compensation and benefits to attract people who value the lives that are, quite literally, in their hands. I applaud any effort to try and find creative ways to address this crisis for Madisonians with disabilities and their families. But this is not an issue that is unique to Madison. If we can find even a few new ways to address these issues, we can help lead the way out of this crisis for people throughout Wisconsin. People with disabilities deserve to be cared for by people who truly care about them, and the workers who do care also deserve our support and admiration for their commitment to this crucial work. Thank you for your consideration of this resolution.

Sincerely,

Tracy A. Miller
Independent Living Specialist
Access to Independence Inc.
3810 Milwaukee Street
Madison WI 53714-2404

From: [Jane Nemke](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Hoyt, Rebecca](#)
Subject: Public comment - agenda item # 76649
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 7:17:52 PM

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Thank you Alders, for considering my input.

Please support the proposed resolution put forth by Alder Vedder to authorize the City Of Madison to develop a comprehensive response to the crisis in home health care in Madison.

I have FSH muscular dystrophy, use a power wheelchair, and am a Commissioner for the City of Madison Disability Rights Commission, since 2016. I am adamant about helping people with disabilities and aging populations stay independent and thrive. Critical elements to that are 1) access to help and 2) removal of barriers.

I live independently, am a responsible, taxpaying citizen, and serve the community in a number of volunteer capacities. What makes that possible is first and foremost, access to in-home help. Then secondly, a place to live with “universal design,” free of wheelchair barriers. Many in our community need what I have.

Please help the city in determining how to best provide Madison area residents with the in-home help they need; whether it be more collaboration with Madison College and CNA programs, ensuring a living wage for home care aids, creating value in in-home care roles, and promoting that value to young people considering careers, better leveraging home care resources,...let’s find a solution to this critical unmet need.

Please support efforts to help all of our citizens live better lives.

Thank you.

Jane Nemke

Jane.Nemke@gmail.com

608-354-1313 (mobile)

www.DesignstoThrive.com

Sent from my iPhone