

Good afternoon everyone and thank you for this opportunity to provide my input on Bill 283.

My Name is Danielle Turpin, I am a PSW with over a decade of experience in retirement, long term care, home care and more recently a Founder of the first PSW worker/owned co-operative in Canada, Homecare Workers' Co-operative Inc. PSWS are in this field because we care. This work is in our DNA and it's how we identify with the world and ourselves. So having the opportunity to speak on this very important Bill is a great honour.

I first want to say that I agree with the Authority's objectives of establishing and maintaining educational and skills-based qualifications for PSWs, as well as establishing and maintaining codes of ethics for our profession.

Ensuring that there is a set curriculum, scope of practice and code of ethics across all sectors will benefit not only the public but will help streamline all PSWs into one professional group as opposed to categorizing them by sector. This current, mismanaged sector categorization is a huge issue in regards to worker pay, precarious hours, and union protection. If this is implemented properly, I can see this being a great way to bring in new PSWs, but most importantly to retain them. All fields need the means to be recognized and PSWs are no exception. I hope that these changes come with plenty of thought, guidance and input from all stakeholders. And most importantly, I hope PSW regulation isn't the only change that will be implemented.

If we are all regulated, meaning we all require the same education, and same scope of practice, it should be safe to assume that we would all have the same base pay. I am asking that within this bill

there be a minimum base pay set for ALL PSWs no matter what sector we work in.

Most importantly, I would also expect that the systemic failures that have been responsible for many worker errors, resident neglect and staff retention be addressed, so as a regulated health professional we will have all the resources and tools available to us to do our job properly and safely. These issues include but are not limited to; staff to resident ratios, staff recruitment and retention, better pay for regulated staff, and more funding for the home care sector and the removal of the for profit model of health care. PSWs cannot be held to a higher standard, be given more responsibility and accountability, yet still be forced to work with the same systemic issues that have plagued this industry for decades. PSWs are not the problem in healthcare, and regulating us without fixing the core issues will not serve the public's best interest.

Even though I am an advocate for regulation, it cannot come without proper protection for workers. There must be a system of checks and balances put in place, and so far this bill does not address this important issue. To have regulation without protection could lead to exploitation and with the recent passing of Bill 218, clearly this government saw a need to put into law protections that will limit *their own* liability and that of employers. We are also well aware of the potential of a criminal investigation being brought forward by the OPP; if something does come of this investigation we also are aware of which group doesn't have lawyers on retainer. Unrepresented PSWs will actually be fighting for our careers and our livelihood and we are the group with the least amount of resources to defend ourselves. If PSWs have to go before the board for any reason what is the mechanism of due process and worker protection for them? Many PSWs, especially in home care are not unionized, and certainly do not

have the money to hire an attorney to defend an unsubstantiated accusation from an angry family member.

A good way to ensure the public is protected and the proper checks and balances are in place is to put in a process of support for ALL workers who may have to navigate this new model. An example of this would be a separate body that offers free legal support similar to legal aid, or duty council.

PSWs are the most marginalized, disenfranchised group of healthcare workers, with the majority of PSWs being racialized women with limited means to advocate and access resources. I believe that regulation is an important step in lifting up this profession, but I ask that you also include within this bill, a plan for a democratic professional association for PSWs. If we are going to be a regulated healthcare professional, and be held to that standard, we also deserve a proper PSW professional association that is separate from the authority. A professional association would allow us to advocate for ourselves, for our profession and those we care for. It should be a non partisan body that does not have any corporate or government interests. Therefore when addressing this issue, I also request that OPSWA not be considered as this professional association. OPSWA does not not represent PSWS as a profession. Their mandate is regulation. Period. Regulation is for the benefit of the public, not the workers. PSWs need a professional association that will offset the authority and put into place the system of due process that is necessary, so that the authority will not be able to tip the scale in favor of employers, the for-profit healthcare industry and their political agenda.

Implementing this professional association, in and of itself could alleviate some of the very real concerns that PSWs have of which I just addressed. It could also be used as the forum to access the legal services I suggested.

I would like to end this by summarizing my key points.

I believe that regulation can be an important positive step forward to legitimize this overworked, undervalued profession if implemented thoughtfully and critically.

I believe that in order for this authority to work as intended, there must be a mechanism of worker protection put in place to allow PSWs to navigate this process equitably. As I mentioned, many PSWs are not protected by unions.

I encourage you to implement a key strategy plan in regards to putting in place the separate non partisan professional body that is there to work and advocate on behalf of ALL PSWS.

And most importantly I beg of you to hear the cries of PSWs and all frontline healthcare workers, when we say we need more help. We are overworked, undervalued, underpaid, and underappreciated. We are constantly working short staffed, and are witness to the severe and deadly consequences of not having the proper resources and supports put into place.

Please implement hard staff to resident ratios similar to what we have in daycares, and in schools. Please provide PSWs with pay that reflects the profession and the scope of practice and accountability that comes with it. And please don't offload the responsibility of this long neglected health care system onto the most precarious and least protected group. It's within your power to give PSWs regulation, and protection.

Thank you for your time.

