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2023-2024 Legislative Agenda

The Providers' Council discussed legislative priorities with its statewide human service membership prior to the start of the session in January 2023. Our legislative agenda is based on feedback and input from our members, our Public Policy Committee, Executive Committee and Board of Directors. The Council's priorities for the legislative session are as follows:

An act relative to a livable wage for human services workers

House Bill filed by Rep. Kay Khan (House 191)

Senate Bill filed by Sen. Cindy Friedman (Senate 84)

Heard by the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities in June 2023.

Similar job titles and roles exist for individuals employed by the Commonwealth and those employed at community-based human services nonprofits, but the rate of pay is often drastically different – sometimes by up to 30 percent. Due to this disparity, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified workers in the community-based human services sector without a livable wage.

This bill would set a schedule to eliminate the pay disparity between state workers and those employed by community-based human services nonprofits who are doing similar work, providing care and services to residents on behalf of the Commonwealth. It would ensure a livable wage for workers, as well as authorize reports from the administration on the current pay disparity between workers and new strategies to recruit and retain human services workers at community-based nonprofits.

An act relative to a loan repayment program for human services workers

House Bill filed by Reps. Jeffrey Roy, Smitty Pignatelli (House 214)

Senate Bill filed by Sen. Sal DiDomenico (Senate 77)

Heard by the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities in June 2023.

Many human services workers' salaries start at just between \$17 and \$19 an hour – below the starting salaries offered by many big box retailers. The lack of affordable higher education for human services workers and the burden of student debt greatly contribute to the sector's recruitment and retention difficulties. More than 75 percent of human services workers attended some college or have a degree.

This bill would create an education loan repayment program for human service workers. To be eligible, workers must be working at least 35 hours per week and have maintained 12 consecutive months of employment in the sector. Applicants would be eligible for up to \$6,000 to repay their qualified education loans if they have an associate degree, up to \$20,000 if they have a bachelor's degree and up to \$30,000 if they have a master's degree.

For more information:

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