

## Budget Reverses Progress

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**T**he 2024 New York State budget finally passed at the beginning of May, a month after it was due. We sometimes take comfort in the phrase, “good things come to those who wait. However, this year’s budget provided no comfort to those who rely on, or work in, CDPA or home care.

The primary take away from this budget is that Gov. Hochul reversed her promise that last year’s \$3.00 per hour home care worker wage increase was “just a start.” Instead, the final budget cut expected wage growth and slashed home care worker benefits.

It was expected home care workers would make \$3.00 over the minimum wage as of Oct. 1 of this year. Therefore, any raises in this budget can’t just be measured against the minimum wage today – they have to be measured against the new minimum wage that is set to grow as well.

When looked at like that, this budget means workers will have to wait until about 2030 to get what they thought they would get in October of this year.

This gets a little more complicated though. In New York City, Long Island and Westchester, the law requires that workers get extra wages or benefits. These extras were *cut* by \$1.55/hour - the same amount as the raise workers were given, meaning tens of thousands of people will essentially pay for their own raise.

This budget will do nothing to help the workforce crisis. It will continue to cement New York’s position as having the worst-in-the-nation shortage of home care workers.

It also does nothing to bring much-needed financial relief to more than 150,000 workers, the majority of whom are women of color, as the cost of food and rent continues to skyrocket.

But it did let large insurance companies and their executives continue to profit off of those workers, and the older and disabled people who use it.

We heard from so many of you that your workers were no longer allowed to work overtime, saw benefit cuts, and more. We knew that was because the money given to these large insurance companies (Centene, the corporate parent of Fidelis, is the eighth largest corporation in the country) to pay for the raises for home care worker wages was kept. Instead of paying the agencies, so they could pay your workers and keep the other benefits and overtime the same.

This budget lets insurance companies continue to reap these windfall profits.

While things feel bleak, we are bruised but not broken. We appreciate everyone who joined us in this fight, and it is not over. We will continue the fight with renewed urgency for the passage of Fair Pay for Home Care in its entirety to finally address the workforce crisis.

You beat back the worst of the cuts. You showed Gov. Hochul and the Legislature that home care – and CDPA in particular – matter and we will not accept anything but the best.

Together, we will be back to continue the fight. Together, we will win.