



DATE: June 24th, 2022

**Testimony of Visiting Angels South Central Michigan  
Before the House Committee on Natural Resources Republicans  
and the Committee on Energy and Commerce Republican Oversight Forum titled:  
"Skyrocketing Energy Costs are Hurting Americans."**

Ranking member Westerman, ranking member Rodgers, and Representative Walberg, Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee on the importance of the skyrocketing energy costs and the detrimental impact its already having today on the home care industry.

My name is Tim Welbaum, I'm a Retired Army Combat Veteran who now has the privilege of serving seniors throughout South Central Michigan as the owner of Visiting Angels Senior Homecare. Our services and the caregivers we employ are critical to the senior community and their ability to survive safely at home and to continue to age in place.

We specialize in providing the vital role of assisting those who cannot function without daily help, the safety and aid they require to remain aging at home, and avoiding the need to be institutionalized in the dreaded nursing homes or assisted living facilities.

Although I serve all types of seniors throughout my territory, my personality and military background has allowed me to become South Central Michigan's leader for serving senior veterans from WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf era Wars.

These men and women, are the neatest individuals I've ever met. Their stories are astonishing to listen to. They answered the call when asked to do so by our great nation, and because of it, their bodies are now failing them, yet they're some of the most proud and humble people I've ever met. Most of the senior Vets I service have very little money and are living beneath the poverty line.

These men and women cannot afford to pay for my services, as they can barely put food in their bellies. Therefore, the only reason I'm able to help them is because they are typically authorized an average of 9-13 hours of home care services a week through the Veteran Affairs.

Due to our large hearts and love for our senior vets, our homecare company has always strived to allow that little 9-13 hours a week to be spread out over 5 days to ensure our vets receive our vital services each day. This was already a struggle before energy prices skyrocketed. Now, it's become nearly impossible to find caregivers who can afford to drive an hour or more round trip to work 1.5 - 2 hour shifts for the wages they make. It doesn't matter how big their hearts are, it doesn't pay for the gas they need in their tanks.

And before anyone concludes that we should just increase our hourly wages, we're already paying \$3-5 more an hour than our closest competitors, yet we haven't raised the rates we charge our clients to account for the higher wages we pay. And this is why....

The home care industry is still relatively new over the last 20-25 years, and insurance companies still haven't caught up with the times to begin to cover non-medical home care services which means the majority of our clientele are paying out of pocket for our services, except our vets, who can only receive



our services because of the VA, as most barely have money for food and rent. And we're now at a point, where if we raise service rates any higher, its going to force the majority of our seniors out of their homes and into nursing homes because it's so unaffordable. Yet, if we don't raise rates soon to cover another increase in wages, which is what's needed, we'll soon be left without caregivers to provide the essential services our clients require to survive safely at home. So what do we do?

Thank you. I look forward to any question you may have.

Warmest Regards,

Tim Welbaum  
Owner/Director  
Visiting Angels - South Central Michigan