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February 15, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Homecare Workers at Bottom of Budget Repair Bill

Governor Walker Targets Most Underpaid Public Employees

As thousands descended upon the State Capitol today in support of public employees, it is easy to forget the most underpaid and marginalized group of public workers– homecare providers. These 5,550 men and women provide in-home care for Wisconsin’s elderly and disabled communities, working without any benefits or access to the state pension system. Independent providers’ net pay is as low as two dollars an hour, and most independent providers have no sick or vacation days, no worker’s compensation, and no healthcare coverage.

“I’ve been a homecare provider for twenty years, caring for five consumers until their death. Every situation has been different, there is no standard pay or benefits. Collective bargaining would help ensure basic standards, so I can focus on providing on the highest quality of care for my client,” said Felix Bellantino, an independent provider in Milwaukee.

Yet, despite these low wages and no benefits, Governor Walker has singled out homecare workers and proposes eliminating all their collective bargaining rights in his budget. Not only does the Governor’s proposal hurt independent providers, it also harms the thousands of seniors and persons of disabilities who rely on quality care by eliminating Wisconsin Quality Home Care Authority. The Authority provides an invaluable service, providing consumers with access to quality homecare workers, offering training for providers, and improving access to information through an online registry.

Homecare is the most preferred and cost-effective method of long-term care. Collective bargaining rights for independent providers and the Authority lessen the turnover rate of homecare workers and thereby increase quality homecare for Wisconsin’s most vulnerable communities.

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