

STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE

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HUMAN SERVICE WORKERS LOBBY LAWMAKERS FOR RAISES

Hundreds of workers who help developmentally disabled people descended on the State House Tuesday, hoping to convince lawmakers to give them a raise. Caregivers said many of their colleagues work two or three jobs to scrape together enough money to get by. Human service workers earn between \$11 and \$12 an hour, according to Lynette Maclver, one of the care workers who visited lawmakers with the group The Caring Force, a statewide coalition of human service agencies. Lori Ayer, who has worked in the field for three years, said "I see a lot of good staff have to come and go because of the pay rate." As someone who manages caregivers, Maclver said it is difficult to find people to stay in a position for long. "I want staff who come into this field and are treated as professionals," she said. According to the Providers' Council, more than 80 percent of jobs in the human services sector are held by women, with 185,000 workers in the sector serving about 660,000 people, or one in ten residents. Many human services organizations provide services to individuals eligible for state government services and human service organizations often rely on government contracts for funds to fuel their operations. - C. Quinn/SHNS

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