

September 17, 2019

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs,

My name is Renata. I'm currently on EAEDC, but am finding it hard to survive and pay my bills. I came to the US after surviving abuse as a child when living in Brazil. Here, I survived relationships with domestic violence, but managed to get my cosmetology license. I was able to open a hair salon that also offered specialized clothing such as prom dresses. My salon was busy and did well.

However, I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2018. I went through treatment but couldn't keep up my salon and had to use up all of my savings. If not for RAFT homelessness prevention funds coming through this month, I probably would've lost my apartment. Having gone from making money to not having any has taken its toll. I've lost motivation; I don't want to go out with friends because I can't afford to do so. I wish I could work, but I struggle with physical and mental health issues. I don't have any family to rely on for financial help and it feels like I'm drowning in bills, with no way out. I am single and don't have any children to help me out.

I currently get by on EAEDC and have a pending SSI claim, but I need more assistance than what EAEDC gives me. I worry about having enough money for the bus to go into Boston for my medical appointments. I feel very frustrated and like I haven't been given a chance. I didn't ask to be sick and to have cancer. Before I got sick, I was a successful businesswoman. Now, I rely on EAEDC, which isn't enough help. Strengthening EAEDC would help people like me get back on their feet and recover from major life events such as cancer. **Please do all you can to pass House Bill 621/Senate Bill 356, An Act relative to assisting elders and people with disabilities in the Commonwealth.**

Sincerely,
Renata