

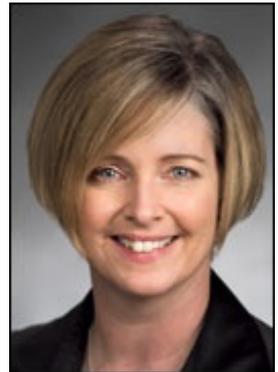


Senator delivers powerful defense of unions

 www.thestand.org/2018/02/sen-cleveland-rebukes-critics-of-unions-in-powerful-floor-speech/

David Groves

OLYMPIA (Feb. 12, 2018) — Last week, there was a heated debate in the Washington State Senate over legislation that pitted the interests of in-home health care providers, their union, and the state agency that oversees those critical services versus an anti-union think tank on a self-declared mission to “defund and discredit” unions for political reasons. The debate led to recriminations of unions, and ultimately on Saturday, to an extraordinarily powerful and emotional speech by Sen. Annette Cleveland (D-Vancouver) admonishing her colleagues to restore a more respectful decorum in the Senate and describing what unions mean to her and her family.



Sen. Annette Cleveland

Requested by the Department of Social and Health Services and supported by SEIU Local 775 and Democrats — along with two Republican co-sponsors — SB 6199 would change the way tens of thousands of home health-care workers provide care. It would create a private entity that would be the legal employer of home-care workers in Washington, freeing up state case managers’ time to focus on monitoring the clients’ needs as opposed to administering employer functions like ensuring providers have met their training requirements.

But the right-wing Freedom Foundation and many Republicans think SB 6199 is merely an effort to force home-care workers to be union members and pay dues. Tempers flared during late-night debate on the bill last Thursday night and some Republicans harshly criticized unions and impugned the motives of the bill’s sponsors. Republicans made a procedural motion that delayed passage of the bill until Saturday, when it was approved on a 26-21 vote.

Before Saturday’s vote, Sen. Cleveland delivered this speech about why she found the debate on the bill so disrespectful and offensive. It is a must-see.

The video clip is [also posted on Facebook here](#).