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***TESTIMONY OF ESTER SANCHES NAEK IN SUPPORT OF RAISED H.B. 5527, AN ACT
CONCERNING A DOMESTIC WORKER BILL OF RIGHTS***

Good afternoon, Senator Holder-Winfield, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Ester Sanches Naek, of Tolland. I have lived in the United States for more than 26 years. I first came here in 1987 to train for the 1988 Olympics Games at Seoul – South Korea. I didn't make the Brazilian Team but decided to stay and try to achieve the American Dream. During my early years here, like most women immigrants I worked as a domestic worker. I was lucky in that I had good employers. One of my employers who was very kind and fair to me was **Mrs. Beverly Curry – Mr. Bill Curry – former State Comptroller's mother – who advised to return to school and finish my education**, but unfortunately this is not the case for most domestic workers. Many suffer verbal abuse and in some cases even physical aggression. They are undervalued and underpaid. Today I have my Masters Degree and I am involved with the politics here in Connecticut and in the United States, as well as my home country of Brazil. I am even planning on running for office here in Connecticut in my own district, because I want to be part of the constructive efforts so many are making to create a better society for all our communities.

Today I wish to speak from the perspective of an employer. I am someone who depends on domestic workers to help me with many of the daily activities of caring for a home, as well as my son. I understand the importance of treating workers fairly, because all work is very important, and all workers should have protection under labor laws. However, many employers are not familiar with the laws, or even know how to treat workers in a fair way, since there are no clear current guidelines to help orient them to what is the right thing to do. They don't understand that this is not a job that young people do after school, but instead it's a job that the mostly women of color who do this job do in order to make a living, and to support their families. They are breadwinners for many American children. There are 2.5 million domestic workers in this country that are needed every day, so people like you and me, and young professionals, can go out and do their jobs – because they know their

homes, their children, and their elderly parents are being well cared for. However, most of these workers have no protections of their own.

I want to thank you for raising the Act Concerning a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, H.B. 5527, and for working with us to make sure that all workers are protected under the law here in Connecticut.