



State of Connecticut

African-American Affairs Commission

State Capitol

210 Capitol Avenue – Room 509

Hartford, CT 06106

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Senator Holder Winfield, Representative Tercyak, Senator Markley, Representative Smith, distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee.

My name is Subira Gordon, Legislative Analyst for the African American Affairs Commission. I am writing today to support Raised Bill 5527 An Act Concerning A Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.

In Connecticut like many other states, domestic workers tend to be immigrant women of color. Currently, there are over 2 million care providers in the US. Many work in exploitive and abusive conditions within a culture that fails to recognize domestic work as labor that deserves recognition, protection, and respect. Their work makes other work possible for others. Without domestic workers many of their employers would not be able to work as they provide childcare, elder care and housecleaning which should be seen as dignified work rather than the negative stigma that attached to domestic work. Thanks to a national organizing effort by African American domestic workers they were able to in 1974 earned the right to a minimum wage. However, this does not address the issue of part time, temporary "off the books" workers who receive very little money and fear retaliation if they ask for more.

The proposed bill requires employers to provide domestic workers at the time of hiring in writing, hours of employment, wage payment schedules, sick pay and vacation expectations as well as other expectations from the employer including transportation and lodging reimbursements. It also includes that employers should provide paid leave annually and puts limitations on non-stop work. These are all concerns to domestic workers who have been exploited by employers to work for very little pay and receive no benefits or paid time off.

If passed this bill would make Connecticut join New York and California as the states who have lead the movement in protecting the rights of domestic workers. Like NY and CA this bill outlines a clear process for filing a complaint which is important for workers who have traditionally been exploited. Raised Bill 5527 will give a voice to an industry that has worked in the shadows for a number of years.

Thank you for your time

Subira Gordon