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February 16, 2015

Sen. Gary Winfield
Rep. Peter Tercyak
Labor and Public Employees Committee
Room 3800, Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Sen. Winfield, Rep. Tercyak, and Members of the Labor Committee:

Many people may consider the care provider field as an informal career since it is a type of job that may have odd hours and requirements, even the work environment itself is informal. Many workers and employers had that view since it is a domestic job, at least that is the way I felt when I decided to be a child care provider.

In the world of nannies and sitters I have encountered different types of family philosophies, people I can trust and be trusted by since I'm taking a big responsibility by caring for their kids, but not every employer shares the importance of what a child provider is, since it goes beyond keeping the child safe while the parents are gone.

I believe that caring for someone a child or an elder is not just a job but a contribution to the world, is a way of influencing people by bonding, building a close relationship. But in the end it is a job. There are rules for both sides that have to be clear, there are boundaries that help to keep a free and honest relationship.

At my last job as a full-time nanny, I encountered many difficulties with the employer, which in previous jobs I never experienced any, since there weren't clear boundaries. There are many aspects of a job description that are revealed when the family and the provider are in an interview, but not every detail can be clear out, sometimes there are details that appear along the way. In this particular experience the job duties were changed inappropriately over time, but they were going way beyond that of a childcare job.

More than a year ago I agreed to a nanny position that included long hours (55 hours a week and on occasion more) with responsibilities to care for an infant, meaning responsibilities that are directly related to the baby, and a small pay, that was fair for the job demands. Within time, as the baby grew, and the baby needs changed more responsibilities were added, some related to the baby and some were not. Until there was a moment where the verbal contract was being forgotten and the demands were growing to a point that the boundaries were broken, since the demands were so much that the job was being changed from a nanny job to a combination of personal assistant, chef,

housekeeper, personal driver, even dry cleaning service. As my view of this job was changing, I was feeling taking advantage of.

I decided it was time to take action, I started to inform myself about what are the requirements for a nanny job, what does an employer expect and what are the duties. I asked other nannies in the area and researched on the web, and came to a simple conclusion, the best way I can solve this issue and feel that I can keep on trusting my employers, was by adding a written contract, a simple way to clarify the boundaries, as I was feeling I wasn't being respected. Five months into the job I approached my employers and requested a written contract. They didn't feel sure about it so nothing happened, and I let it go. Four months later, the additional work unrelated to the child continued. It got to the point that I was requested to drive the family for one hour each way to the airport, I didn't feel comfortable with the request and I explained to the family but they insisted. I felt at the moment the abusive requests were not stopping at any time, so I requested to have a meeting. At this meeting I did emphasize that the extra demands were not part of the job description, that it would be necessary to have a written contract. The family's response wasn't positive since this time I showed them all the information I had found on the web, even I shared the Bill of Rights for domestic workers.

After having a numerous meetings with the family, and reviewing the documentation they agreed to create a written contract. For this purpose they requested for me to create a job responsibility list. When I finished with it and they reviewed it, they didn't like it and decided to let me go.

At this point I had the impression that they had a plan that wasn't clear to me and never was discussed. My performance as a nanny was always my best, and they agreed I created a strong bond with their baby. I even sacrificed precious time with my daughter and partner for this job's extra-long hours. The bond was so strong that the baby called me "mama" because I cared for him for so many hours in the day. But in the end, this was only a job for the parents, it didn't matter the care, time, and love that the baby and I had invested.

Now I am jobless but with more experience and more knowledge. Most importantly, I got to understand how important it is to bring a simple and legal agreement to the job, not matter how informal this job can be perceived. A written contract at the beginning of this job would have allowed me to stay in this job for more years to come and would have ensured a clear and respectful relationship between the employer and the nanny.

There is a Spanish saying that applies to my experience, it says "con cuentas claras, amistades largas" meaning "long friendships comes with clear agreements."

I urge the committee to vote for the CT Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in Connecticut – S.B. 446.

Sincerely,

Carla Goyes
Cos Cob, CT