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My name is Iame Manucci, and when I was 10 years old I moved to the United States with my parents. Though in Brazil she was an administrator for the board of education and a philosophy professor, my mother began to work as a house cleaner as soon as we arrived. She worked extremely hard and suffered many injustices.

We gradually witnessed her job duties being extended far beyond her pay. In addition to cleaning she found herself babysitting, cooking, and serving as a driver for the families she worked for. Because she didn't master the language and desperately needed to earn money, it was hard for her to impose boundaries and defend herself. We were undocumented at the time, and vulnerable as many new immigrants are. I distinctly remember one of my mother's employers, a well renowned lawyer, would pay her sporadically, purposely skipping payments and effectively withholding her wages. It amazed me to see the kind of exploitation that proliferated in American homes every day. So many times I helped my mother clean other people's homes, I watched her body decay after years of tough physical work and exposure to chemicals, and her spirit repeatedly crushed by the overwhelming injustice that comes with living in the margins of society, unprotected by the law. Some years later, my mother was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, and it is hard not to attribute her diagnosis to the years of hard labor and stress she suffered as a domestic worker.

Today I am a college graduate and an American citizen, all because of the sacrifices my mother made. Because she humbled herself and worked hard for so many families, I was able to enjoy a life of opportunity. It is imperative that domestic workers be fully protected under the law. The State of Connecticut must move toward the inclusion of Domestic Workers in labor laws that ensure they are paid fairly and are not abused on a daily basis.

Sincerely,

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