

CT Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights S.B. 446

Good afternoon Members of the Labor Committee:

My name is Noreen Noll. I live at 890 Stratfield Road in Fairfield, CT. I am here to speak in support of S.B. 446 concerning a CT Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. I am Vice President of the New England Board of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who are in favor of this legislative initiative to provide the same rights to this group of workers as most other workers have here in Connecticut.

I first became aware of the challenges these workers encounter every day about 2 years ago when Meghan Vesel, Deputy Director of the Brazillian Immigrant Center in Bridgeport, had applied for a grant from the Women of the ELCA to financially help her new support group for women from Brazil and other Central and South American countries to cope with the challenges they were encountering each day with work and living here in America. Inez Torres Davis, who at the Women of the ELCA in Chicago would be determining who would receive a grant, asked us on the New England Board if we knew of this organization. I did some checking and found they were doing good work here and the grant was given. I then became a liaison between the New England Board and the Brazillian Immigration Center. I attended meetings with the women and their families and learned a great deal about them and their experiences.

These workers take care of our families and homes. They are given great responsibilities and promises concerning wages, working hours and other conditions but unfortunately not all employers are trustworthy. If the worker was told they would receive a certain amount of money for a week's work and the employer reneges, what can the worker do? What if sexual harassment occurs, who can they turn to? If they are injured on the job and the employer refuses to get them medical help but instead threatens them with losing their job, what can they do? I have heard these ladies testify to these types of situations. It is time for them and others like them to have a safe and dignified work environment.

New York, California and Hawaii have passed Domestic Worker Bill of Rights since 2010. Legislation is pending in Illinois, Oregon and Massachusetts. The time has come for Connecticut to join in bringing justice to the 60,000 domestic workers in our state. Both employers and employees will benefit by everyone having clear guidelines on their responsibilities. We support the passing of a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights and hope you will support S.B. 446. Thank you.

Noreen Noll 2/17/15



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