Brazilian Worker Center Inc.

20 Years of Advancing Justice in Our Community & Beyond

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Brazilian Worker Center for All
Testimony of Patricia Rosas opposing the Act Concerning Domestic Service and Overtime Pay
Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees
February 25, 2016

Good afternoon Chairman and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Patricia Rosas. I am here today with the Brazilian Worker Center opposing the *Act Concerning Domestic Service and Overtime Pay.*

About five years ago I started working as a domestic worker and companion. At first all went well, and I liked my job because I was living with people of different nationalities, cultures and customs. I worked for a lot of people that were needy; they needed to receive a lot of love and understanding from their companions like me who had to be patient and wonderful to them. I also have worked for very unpleasant people. I always tried to be kind with the people that I worked for and I helped them a lot, but to be honest many times the company gave me a job that made me feel uncomfortable. Even when I felt uncomfortable, I wanted to keep my job, so I did what the company asked me to. The hours that I worked varied every day and I had to go from house to house. Sometimes I was welcomed at the houses and sometimes I was not. One time the company gave me a job in which I had to pay for parking, $1.50, and I had to go to this job three times per week. I went to complain about it and they told me that they were not going to pay for my parking so they looked for a spot that I could park my car for free.

On another occasion, I was sent to work at a house of a very arrogant and grumpy woman. In the first time she told me that I was not supposed to touch her furniture, nor use her bathroom. When she told me those things I was very upset, but I had the patience that I needed to work for her. Still, it was hard to put up with her rudeness. In one of her bad days, she told me not to wear any perfume, hair spray or any sort of fragrances because that bothered her a lot.

One day, after she had been rude to me so many times, I decided that I would not work for her anymore because I could not take her mistreatment. Then, I went to talk with my boss and she told me that it was not easy to find employees that would work for that kind of people.

The company then gave me a new job. They sent me to a man's house where I always thought that he did not need a companion because he looked well. He acted weird around me. I was supposed to clean his house only, but he often asked me to sit down next to him to watch TV. Sometimes he tried to put his arms around me - that happened more than one time. He also liked to stand in his bedroom door watching me while I cleaned his room. Once again I had to complain about this man in the company's office because that was not right.

The worst thing for me was when I had to go to the company's office to let them know about what it was happening. The company always found a way to justify their clients' behavior. They told me that they were elderly and that I should understand their behavior. The company should let their clients know that they should not mistreat their companion. My boss told me that they never had complaints like that before and that she could not believe in what I was saying. Eventually I had leave the company because they gave me five to ten hours to work per week, and with that much hours I did not make enough money.

Thank you.