



20 Years of Advancing Justice in Our Community & Beyond

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**Brazilian Worker Center for All
Testimony of Maria Lima supporting An Act Domestic Worker
Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees
March 8th, 2016**

Good afternoon Chairmen and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Maria Lima, and I am 45 years old. I am here today with the Brazilian Worker Center supporting the *Senate Bill 393 - An Act Domestic Worker*.

When I moved to the United States with my two children, I believed that if I worked hard I would be able to afford a good education for my kids, but I did not expect to suffer so many abuses working as a domestic worker.

In my first job as a domestic worker I worked twelve hours per day and I earned \$2.80 per hour. In the beginning I did not complaint about it because I had just arrived, I did not speak English, and I had to work to make money to pay bills and to take care of my children. At the end of every month I found myself desperate because I was barely making the money for my rent. I lived in this situation for a long time, until I started to wonder if it was for me to get paid that small amount per hour. One day when I went to complaint with my boss about how much I got paid for, she told me that she would not pay me more because I was an immigrant that did not speak English well, and I had no rights in this country. Those words upset me, and I never felt so humiliated in my life. I changed jobs several times believing that the problem was with the employees, but then I learned that it was not. This was, and still is, a systematic problem that occurred to most of the domestic workers.

Today, working as community organizer for the Brazilian Worker Center, I have heard so many stories of domestic worker that have been through a lot of humiliation, and all sort of abuse at their work place. When the domestic workers come looking for help at the BWC, we want to help them but we are limited to do it since there is not a law that protects the domestic workers in the state of Connecticut. It is horrible that there is not a law that protects these hard workers that make all other work possible. So, I ask you kindly to pass the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights in order for us to stop the exploitation and humiliation that the domestic workers have been through for so many years.

Thank you,

Maria Lima.