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The Rev. Joshua Pawelek
Minister

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Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

I am the Rev. Josh Pawelek, minister of the Unitarian Universalist Society: East in Manchester, and a resident of Glastonbury. I am writing to express my support for SB 393, “An Act Concerning Domestic Workers.”

In short, SB 393 strengthens the rights of domestic workers, sometime referred to as Personal Care Assistants or PCAs. PCAs are workers hired to work in the home. They are caregivers. They care for children. They care for people living with disabilities. They care for people living with chronic, debilitating illnesses. They care people living with Alzheimer’s Disease and dementia. They take care of people who are dying. They provide childcare, medical care, cleaning and other kinds of homemaking. They provide rides; they shop for food and other household necessities; they run errands. ***They are the workers whose work makes all other work possible!*** And yet, they are one of the most vulnerable and exploited classes of workers in the United States. This is because we as a society have refused to regard their work as ‘real’ work. They have been excluded from federal labor laws including the Fair Labor Standards Act, the National Labor Relations Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, and the Occupational Safety and Health Act. This is beginning to change at the national level. It must also change at the state level. Domestic Workers are real workers, and they deserve the same rights as other workers.

SB 393 would ensure that PCAs in Connecticut have the right to:

- accrue paid leave after one year of employment;
- receive 24 hours off for every 7-day work week;
- earn overtime wages for hours worked beyond the regular work week;
- receive a clear job description;
- receive written notice prior to termination or to receive adequate compensation in lieu of a termination notice;
- not be forced to use potentially toxic chemicals for the purposes of cleaning, and to have the ability to suggest alternative cleaning methods and substances;



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- engage in private communication without interference by an employer;
- not have their personal belongings seized or searched by an employer;
- not have their private living area entered by an employer without their permission;
- be able to file complaints with the Labor Commissioner for violations of their rights; and
- not be penalized or dismissed from a position simply for advocating for their rights.

There is nothing extraordinary about any of these rights. They are standard rights for the vast majority of American workers. It is long past time that we made them available to the workers whose work makes all other work possible. Please support SB 393.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Joshua Mason Pawelek