



# State of Connecticut

## Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

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### Testimony Supporting SB 393

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Labor & Public Employees Committee, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Hartford, CT

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Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Orlando Rodriguez and I am an Associate Commission Analyst with the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). LPRAC supports **SB 393: AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTIC WORKERS.**<sup>1</sup>

Domestic workers and farm workers are among the few categories of workers still excluded from basic protections provided under national and state labor laws. The denial of basic labor rights under existing law serves to perpetuate racial discrimination because **persons of color, foreign-born** persons including workers from Latin America, and **women** account for **95 percent** of domestic workers.<sup>2</sup> SB 393 provides domestic workers with minimum labor rights that are given to other workers in Connecticut. When enacted, employers of domestic workers will have to provide their employees:

- In writing, their pay rate, duties, sick leave, vacation leave, and availability of other benefits.
- Additional compensation when they work seven days in a calendar week.
- Paid leave after a minimum period of employment.
- Privacy with personal communication.
- Privacy in their designated living area for live-in domestic workers.
- Advance written notice prior to termination.

Furthermore, domestic workers are given protection from termination if they file a complaint against their employer for violating labor laws. The Connecticut Department of Labor is given authority to implement a multilingual program to inform domestic workers of their labor rights and to inform employers of their responsibilities when hiring a domestic worker.

We expect these fundamental workers' rights for all workers in Connecticut. If enacted, SB 393 would abolish a legally sanctioned form of discrimination that has deprived domestic workers of the basic protections that have been afforded to other workers. Similar legislation has become law in New York, California and Hawaii. Connecticut should be next.

LPRAC is grateful to this committee for its ongoing focus on the needs of the growing workforce of Latinos in Connecticut. Our board has made it clear that stopping discrimination in the workplace is a top priority for Latinos in Connecticut.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the sources of information used in this testimony can be found in LPRAC's 2016 Legislative Policy Agenda at,

[https://www.cga.ct.gov/lprac/docs/2016/LPRAC\\_2016Agenda\\_Web\\_08Jan2016.pdf](https://www.cga.ct.gov/lprac/docs/2016/LPRAC_2016Agenda_Web_08Jan2016.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Kyle Bond, *The Color of Help*, Center for American Progress, June 2011, at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/news/2011/06/17/9783/the-color-of-help/>