



Connecticut Working Families Organization
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Dear Members of the Task Force on Domestic Workers,

My name is Ana María Rivera-Forastieri and I am the Political Director of the Connecticut Working Families Organization. Working Families organizes on behalf of working and middle class families on social and economic justice issues. We have historically advocated for laws and policies that improve the quality of life of workers and their families—good wages, affordable healthcare, workplace protections and the right to collectively bargain.

This is why we are troubled by the fact that domestic workers, who play a critical role in Connecticut's economy, have been excluded from important labor protections that have been guaranteed to most of Connecticut's workforce.

There are approximately 40,000 domestic workers in the state of Connecticut. These workers are providing essential services to individuals and their families. Some of these include caregiving for children and elderly dependents, cleaning and house maintenance. The majority of these workers are immigrant women who work in private households in order to provide for their own families. The immigrant community is already in a disadvantageous position when it comes to labor and employment protections because individuals fear that complaining about workplace abuses can result in retaliatory actions by the employer.

But these women and workers make up the most vulnerable workforce in our state because they have been excluded from major federal and state employment and labor laws.

While Connecticut has been ahead of the game on a multitude of economic justice issues, we have been unable to guarantee many of these victories to domestic workers. For example, the Connecticut Minimum Wage Act has excluded some domestic workers by narrowing the definition of employees that are covered by the state minimum wage. Our Workers Compensation law rarely covers domestic workers because it requires that they work over 26 hours a week to be covered—this limitation does not apply to other workers in the state. The CT Paid Sick Days law does not cover domestic workers either, because it only applies to businesses with 50 or more employees. Lamentably, these are just some of the instances in which our laws have failed domestic workers.

This taskforce has an obligation to make recommendations that will not only protect but will provide dignity to these workers. The taskforce should establish fair industry standards by recommending legislation that will amend current Connecticut law to include these workers in its minimum wage and overtime laws, it should extend Workers Compensation to include more domestic workers and it should provide benefits like paid sick days and time off. Legislation should be in the form of a Domestic

Workers Bill of Rights, which will address many of the aforementioned issues in a comprehensive manner.

I urge you to issue recommendations that will set a fair standard and provide protections to a workforce that has been silenced for a long time. I must also urge you to dedicate resources for outreach and education for both the workers and the employers. Domestic workers usually work in individual homes so it is challenging for them to learn about their rights in collective setting.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to seeing the recommendations offered by this taskforce and hope that Connecticut can finally address the plight of domestic workers.