

**Brazilian Immigrant Center for All  
Domestic Workers Project of Connecticut**  
1067 Park Avenue  
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

**Via Email: LABTestimony@cga.ct.gov**

November 17, 2014

Sen. Gary Winfield  
Rep. Peter Tercyak  
Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Room 3800, Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

To Dear Sen. Winfield and Rep. Tercyak:

My name is Natalicia Tracy. I am a Sociology PhD Candidate at Boston University and the Executive Director of the Brazilian Immigrant Center, here in Bridgeport, Connecticut. *I speak on behalf of the Brazilian Immigrant Center members, of whom many are domestic workers, as I was myself for 15 years.* We thank you for raising the bill. We also thank the more than 30 organizations that have joined us from labor, faith communities, employers, legal groups and other allies -- all in support of this bill.

You have heard from other workers and I support their voices being heard, as I too was victimized because of the historic exclusion of domestic workers from key rights. When I was a teenager, only 17, I got a proposal from a nice family to come with them to the United States as a nanny for their children. They promised me many opportunities, and said that because I would be here alone, they would even be my family...but instead: once here in Boston I found myself working 80 to 90 hours a week, doing all the cooking, cleaning, and laundry, taking care of the children and sleeping on a glassed-in three season porch with a bare concrete floor. They paid me \$25 dollars a week. After one year, they gave me a raise to \$35 dollars. They wouldn't let me receive mail, use the telephone, or contact my family. For a long time they kept my passport. Finally, two years later when the family decided to leave Boston, I was able to be free from their abuse....but during *all the time that I was with them*, I had no recourse to any protective laws.

I am not alone in having been treated this way. Domestic service is the one of the highest occupations that is subjected to exploitation such as illegal deductions from their pay, no pay at all, or long working hours with no clarity about when work begins and ends, or what the job duties really are. This bill addresses many workers' rights issues, and will provide civil remedies to address these unfair

conditions that have their roots in a long history of labor exploitation in our country going back to the days of slavery and Jim Crow.

All domestic workers seeking, as I did, dignity, respect and protection from abuse, are grateful for the opportunity to explore the issues and working conditions facing domestic workers in Connecticut. I want to thank you so much for establishing the domestic workers task force and I urge the taskforce to reintroduce a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights in Connecticut.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Natalicia Tracy", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Natalicia Tracy

Executive Director