

NATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS ALLIANCE

NEW JERSEY DOMESTIC WORKER BILL OF RIGHTS (S723/A822)

Sponsored by Senator Richard J. Codey and Assemblywoman Britnee N. Timberlake

It is time for New Jersey to support the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, to guarantee and promote the rights of our essential workforce of domestic workers!

The New Jersey Domestic Worker Bill of Rights corrects the injustices of the past by striking the exclusions of domestic workers from protections under New Jersey's employment laws. It ensures domestic workers are guaranteed the same rights as other workers and creates robust protections to ensure fair working conditions and recourse against abusive and exploitative conditions in the workplace. There are an estimated 50,000 domestic workers in New Jersey. **Here are their stories.**

Shoba Bhusal, Nanny Newport & Jersey City

My name is Shoba Bhusal, I have been a domestic worker for six years and worked in Newport and Jersey City. I am member of the community group Adhikaar. Before my employers relocated to Virginia during the pandemic, I worked for them in Jersey City as a live out nanny for around 50 hours a week. I was responsible for not only the care of two children, but also the family's laundry twice a week and cooking three meals a day. I was only paid \$500 a week with no overtime pay. My workload tripled in three years but my salary stayed the same.

"The 50,000 + domestic workers in New Jersey have similar stories — this is not just my story. We all need better protections for the essential work we do."

The passage of the NJ Domestic Worker Bill of Rights is so important to me because I was not given a written agreement with the list of my job duties or guarantees for even a 30 minute meal break. At the time I was hired, the family told me the job only involved picking up and dropping off the kids from/to school. After working from 8am-6pm, I only got home after 7pm so I had to find someone to pick up my own son from school. I sacrificed caring for my own children, in order to work a job earning less than the minimum wage to care for my employer's children.

Nubiola Zalazar, Housecleaner Madison, NJ

My name is Nubiola Zalazar, I am an immigrant woman from Colombia and and a member of the community group Wind of the Spirit. I have been a domestic worker for 19 years, working as a housecleaner with great determination and courage. At first I worked for cleaning companies, but they forced me to do extra work beyond what I was hired without adjusting my pay.

While I have had some good experiences as a domestic worker, i have also faced significant hardships - suffering from discrimination because of my race, skin color, and my inability to speak English fluently. At one job, my employers hired me as a housecleaner but then also expected me to take care of their children for the same pay and hours. They forced me to take on all the extra responsibilities, while also expecting me to clean the shoes of the whole family. I have felt that I have not been valued as a person and for my work, and it has felt like a kind of slavery in disguise. As a domestic worker, I have been excluded from the labor protections that exist in New Jersey and currently work with several different employers, but do not have written contracts that detail the activities or functions, nor do I have time for meal or rest breaks. During the pandemic, I experienced the most dire circumstances in my lifetime, when my employer terminated my employment without notice- and I could not support my family financially after the sudden loss of income.

Monica, Homecare worker North Bergen

My name is Monica and I am a homecare worker in North Bergen, NJ and I am a member of New Labor. I was a professional nurse in Peru and now serve elderly clients in their home who rely on my skilled knowledge and care. One of my clients is a 101 year old senior who suffers from multiple medical conditions including diabetes and dementia. He uses an artificial cardiac pacemaker to help his heart pump blood and a suprapubic catheter, which means I must regularly change his adult diapers. My patient requires homecare services 24 hours a day and I work the night shift and must help him move to different positions every two hours to avoid bed sores. My duties require helping him follow a strict liquid diet and administer crushed medications and insulin twice a day.

Like many home care workers, I only have a verbal agreement for my position, and I would benefit from a written agreement which would allow me negotiate and have clarity around terms of employment, such as right to earn sick leave, vacations and paid holidays or extra pay for working holidays. Homecare workers must receive time to recover from the hard work that we do because rest enables us to provide the elderly with the best care.

Contact us

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Founded in 2007, the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) is the nation's leading voice for the approximate 2.2 million domestic workers in the United States. Domestic workers are essential to our economy and society. They are the nannies that take care of our children, the housecleaners that maintain our homes, and the care workers that allow our loved ones to live independently and with dignity.