Faith Leader Pledge in Support of Domestic Workers

As faith leaders we believe that all people have been created in the image of the Creator and that each person has divine worth. We believe that work is meant to be an invitation for all of us to participate in God’s continuing acts of creation. To deny workers their basic human rights is to deny God’s creative designs.

Therefore, we declare our solidarity with domestic workers. Domestic workers are the nannies, house cleaners, and home care workers whose work makes all other work possible. In the DMV area, domestic workers are overwhelmingly women of color and the majority are immigrants. These workers power the economy by freeing up the time and attention of others to fulfill their calling.

Historically, domestic workers have been excluded from basic labor protections. These exclusions are a direct result of a long legacy of racism and sexism. The domestic workforce has always been and is still a majority women of color workforce. When the bedrock labor protections of the Fair Labor Standards Act and the National Labor Relations Act were being passed in the 1930s, domestic workers, along with agricultural workers, were excluded from these laws. This compromise was struck in order to gain the votes of southern lawmakers, who did not want to grant these protections and power to the overwhelmingly Black workforce that performed domestic and agricultural work at the time.

The 47,000 domestic workers who live in the DMV area need a Bill of Rights to protect their basic dignity as workers. The Domestic Workers Bill of Rights must include:

- The same human rights protections and occupational safety and health protections for domestic workers as all other workers;
- Require written agreements between domestic workers and their employers to ensure workers know their rights and employers are aware of their responsibilities; and
- Establish a Domestic Work Outreach and Education Program within the Department of Employment Services (DOES). DOES will collaborate with organizations that work with domestic workers and employers to provide education and training on labor standards in the industry.

Signed (organizations for informational purposes only):

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