



**"Thank you for saving my job for me, today my kids and I want to thank you for giving us our family back. Happy holy day. May God bless you and the project."**

This message was posted to the First Shift Facebook account on Thanksgiving Day.



Here is the thankful client's **ridiculously** long story:

**Rita** called in August, about a month before her due date, to ask about her right to take leave after she had the baby. She had saved up three weeks of paid leave in her job as a respiratory therapist at a local hospital, but her doctor said she would need at least six weeks to recover. The Human Resources manager told her she was not entitled to any leave beyond the three weeks she had saved because she did not qualify for unpaid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act.

A First Shift attorney emailed her a copy of D.C.'s pregnancy accommodations law, which gives D.C. employees the right to follow their doctors' advice to take the time necessary to recover from childbirth.

**That should have been the end of it, but it wasn't.**

Rita said her employer did not "believe" the law and denied her request to take six weeks of leave. The First Shift lawyer wrote a letter to her employer, explaining her rights and attaching the law *again*.

***That should have been the end of it. It wasn't.***

More than a week after Rita gave birth, her employer elected to request medical certification. Rita promptly supplied the medical certification, in which the doctor provided the date of delivery and recommended that she return to work six weeks later.

The employer - *a hospital* - denied the request again, asking for a more detailed medical certification. The First Shift attorney then reached out to the doctor and a new doctor's note was drafted.

Finally, just days before Rita would have exhausted her three weeks of employer-provided leave, her request for three additional weeks was approved and she was able to breathe a sigh of relief. If a few more days had passed, she would have been forced to choose between risking her health or risking being fired for abandoning her job.

All Rita wanted was three more weeks. If she had been fired or had returned to work before she was cleared by her doctor, the fact that she had a right which was violated would do little to restore her job or her health. **First Shift's preventive work keeps mothers and families intact.**

First Shift wants to help more clients like Rita to keep their jobs. **Whether you donate today for Giving Tuesday or at 11:55 p.m. on December 31st, please consider supporting the women and families we serve in your end-of-year giving.**

Thank you!

# #GIVING TUESDAY



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