



## **Protect D.C. Domestic Workers from Workplace Discrimination and Sexual Harassment**

D.C.'s Human Rights Act does not currently protect domestic workers who are employed by individuals or families to care for children, clean, or care for elderly or disabled family members. In D.C. it is *not illegal* for employers of domestic workers to sexually harass them or discriminate against them in hiring based on gender (including pregnancy), race, national origin, age, or any other characteristic enumerated by the D.C. Human Rights Act. It is time for D.C. to eliminate this exclusion and protect these workers, just like it protects all other workers within its boundaries.

- Domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination. Domestic workers are primarily women of color, who are marginalized in most U.S. workplaces. They typically work alone and behind the closed doors of a private household; this isolation exacerbates their vulnerability. Domestic workers are also typically paid low wages, which makes it more likely that they will endure harassment and discrimination rather than quitting or risking job loss by complaining.
- There are many domestic workers in D.C. The National Domestic Workers Alliance estimates that over 100,000 domestic workers are employed in private households throughout the Washington Metro Area, many of whom work in D.C.
- No other employees are excluded from the broad, protective provisions of the D.C. Human Rights Act. Virtually every employee who works in D.C. except for domestic workers (and family member employees of a family business) is covered by D.C.'s Human Rights Act, with the right to work free of discrimination and the right to file a complaint if that right is violated.
- Domestic workers are excluded from federal anti-discrimination laws, which do not cover smaller employers. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Americans with Disabilities Act; and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act only cover employers of 15 or more employees.
- Domestic workers are protected in other neighboring jurisdictions such as Montgomery County and Prince George's County in Maryland. See Montgomery County Code S. 27-19 and Prince George's County Code 2-185. Montgomery County has also passed a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights.

Legislative change is required to protect domestic workers from sexual harassment and discrimination. The time to act is now!

For more information or to get involved in the campaign, please visit our website at [www.firstshift.org/domestic-workers](http://www.firstshift.org/domestic-workers) or contact Laura Brown at First Shift Justice Project, [lbrown@firstshift.org](mailto:lbrown@firstshift.org); 240-241-0897.