

# Voices of Domestic Workers

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A weekly series highlighting issues faced by domestic workers, in support of A01470, the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights.

## DOMESTIC WORK IS...

- **VITAL WORK**
- a labor of love
- **UNPROTECTED**
- precarious
- physical abuse
- **DEMEANING TREATMENT**
- emotional abuse
- mistreatment
- racism
- sexual harassment
- long hours
- **LOW PAY**
- no rest
- no food
- no rights
- no privacy
- no respect
- **EXHAUSTING**
- isolated and invisible
- manipulation based on immigration status
- no holidays
- no sick days
- no vacations
- no recovery time
- no time off
- no healthcare
- **A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**
- getting fired for speaking up
- unsafe
- left to chance
- arbitrary
- **ON-THE-SPOT FIRING**
- **EVICTION IF FIRED**
- **NO SAFETY NET**
- bad for self esteem
- barely regulated

## ... A WORKFORCE IN CRISIS



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**Marina was paid just \$2 an hour, and made to sleep in a basement filled with sewage. Then Marina's employers fired her without notice, and she became homeless overnight.**



## *Marina's Story*

"I found work in a house, caring for a disabled youth. I ended up doing everything – the housecleaning, the ironing, the food. I had to carry him and help him in the bathroom. I had to bathe him and even brush his teeth. And for all of this, I was paid \$2.00 per hour.

"I slept in the basement, where the sewage often overflowed. I had to find cardboard in order to walk around and get out of the basement to go and perform my daily housework. I also had to pick up wood in addition to the cardboard in order to pass through and also to open the backdoor so I could step outside to the sun and for the stench to leave.

"Two and a half years later, my employer – on my day off – called to tell me she needed me early. I arrived and I told her I am here like you asked me. And it was to tell me that I no longer had work. Well, you can imagine how one would feel – after a shock like that – without telling me why. She offered no explanation.

"I asked her for permission to stay in the house that night so I could go out and find another place to live – I could not even sleep thinking about where I would go next. No one knows what I went through that night."

**Marina later sued her employers. It took her four years, but just this month, she finally won a settlement.**

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***Domestic workers who live in their employer's home rely on their job for food and shelter. Under current law, they can be fired without notice, which can leave them with no place to go and no safety net.***

***The Domestic Workers Bill of Rights would provide workers like Marina with the right to notice and severance pay upon termination, among other urgently needed protections.***

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Assemblymembers interested in co-sponsoring A01470 should contact the office of Assemblymember Keith L.T. Wright, sponsor of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.