

Support for Endorsing the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights

- Why should people of faith support the more than **200,000 women** who work as nannies, companions and housekeepers in New York State? *To stand in solidarity with the Domestic Workers is to share the comfort we have received in our times of need with those who are discomforted.* (II Corinthians 1.3-4)
- Domestic workers care for the most important elements of New Yorkers' lives: their **families and homes**. Yet, their work is devalued and they are often treated as less than human. Without the labor of domestic workers, many employers could not participate in the workforce, from Wall Street to hospitals. *It is not fair for employers to disregard the value of the work and support that the Domestic Workers provide for their employers.* (Jeremiah 22.13)
- Domestic workers work long hours, often upwards of 10 hours per day and sometimes as much as **16 hours per day**. The vast majority receive no overtime pay, health insurance, or regular vacations. Many are fired without notice or severance after years of service, without recourse. *To withhold fair wages from Domestic Workers is to commit robbery. To deny the Domestic Workers fair recourse is to deny them justice.* (Ezekiel 22.29)
- Currently, there is **no safety net** for domestic workers. If a domestic worker should suddenly fall ill or suffer injury, the vast majority will not qualify for existing social safety nets such as unemployment or disability benefits. *Is there any among us who would deny their sister or brother the supply of their basic needs?* (Leviticus 19.9-10)
- Domestic workers are **excluded from labor laws** that protect other workers, including protection from discrimination and the right to bargain collectively. Concern for Domestic Workers doesn't end with fair wages and health care. *To support the Domestic Workers means being justly concerned that they are included in the benefits extended to other workers.* (Proverbs 29.7)
- The protections that do exist for domestic workers in state laws **are often not enforced**. Employers violate the law knowing that there is little risk of being caught. *All employees are deserving of fair treatment by the employer. The Bill of Rights will help enforce the laws that exist and support new legislation.* (Colossians 4.1)
- Domestic workers are **isolated** working inside individual homes, so it is difficult for them to organize collectively to improve working conditions, as is possible in most other industries. In addition, the law does not protect their right to organize. *There is power and strength in numbers. Raising awareness of this issue will bring more and more people together with the Domestic Workers. We cannot be broken if we stand together.* (Ecclesiastes 4.13)

Additional references:

Leviticus 19.9-10 - When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God. (Safety net)

Leviticus 26:13 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high.

Deuteronomy 15.7 - If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your needy neighbour. ⁸You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be.

Nehemiah 4.19-20 - "The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!"

Psalms 10.17-18 ⁷ You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.

Psalms 82.3-4 - Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Proverbs 29.7 - The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor...

Proverbs 14.31 - Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honour him.

Ecclesiastes 4.13 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Jeremiah 22.3 - This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.

Jeremiah 22.13 - "Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.

Jeremiah 22.16 - ¹⁶ He [King Josiah] defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD.

Ezekiel 22.29 - The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the alien, denying them justice.

Micah 6.8 - He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

I Timothy 5.18 "...for the scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain', and, 'The labourer deserves to be paid.'"

Colossians 4.1 - And masters, treat your servants considerately. Be fair with them. Don't forget for a minute that you, too, serve a Master—God in heaven.

II Corinthians 1.3-4 - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.