



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
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TESTIMONY ON THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
CONCERNING DOMESTIC WORKERS WAGE ENFORCEMENT
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
February 19, 2021

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference is the public policy and advocacy organization representing the Catholic bishops in Connecticut. The Conference, over the last several years, has become keenly aware of the abuse of domestic workers in terms of wages and terms of employment. Many of these workers are immigrants, documented and undocumented, seeking to be participating and self-sustaining members of our communities. Unfortunately, there are members of our society who fail to recognize the rights of these workers to the minimum wage and other benefits commonly provided to other employees by employers or required by law. Many domestic workers, being new to our country, are unaware of their rights under law.

The Conference, a member of the CT Domestic Workers Coalition, urges the Appropriations Committee to increase funding for the Wage Enforcement Division of the Department of Labor to protect the rights of domestic workers. The proposal by the CT Domestic Workers Coalition would utilize a limited number of existing community organizations to help educate the domestic workers about their rights under law and to help inform employers about their responsibilities. The Coalition is currently in discussions with the Department of Labor on this proposal. We urge this committee to budget an appropriately determined amount of funds to assist the Department and these community organizations to accomplish this goal.

The Catholic Church has long taught that “all people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions, as well as to organize and join unions or other associations”.¹ This proposed legislation is an effort to give workers dignity and the protections they deserve as human beings through fair wages and legal protections.

The Conference believes that the proposed program, with a supporting allocation of funds, will address a group of workers in our communities that has for too long been neglected, mistreated by employers and frowned down upon by many in our society. Their dignity as not only workers, but as contributing members of our society (documented or undocumented) must be respected.

Deacon David Reynolds
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¹ (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [A Catholic Framework for Economic Life](#), no. 5)