

My Testimony In Favor of Bill H7532

My name is Carmen Cifuentes, I live in the city of Pawtucket and I work as a caregiver for a 3-year-old child with special needs. I want to share my experience as a domestic worker and what the legislation (H7532) for minimum wage and overtime would mean for me.

I need to arrive at the family's house by 7am, before the parents leave for work. Initially, the child's mother provided me with special food she had previously prepared for her son, with detailed instructions, as he has a number of allergies. Over time, when she observed my skills and the child's attachment to me, she gained confidence in me and told me from that point on, I was to prepare all of his foods, because she saw that I was careful and understood his allergies. It did not bother me at first because I had become quite fond of the child, but I don't think it is fair because it was not part of the agreement when I started. Additionally, the child requires a lot of attention due to his special condition which makes preparing food very difficult, as I am alone with him during the day.

I am paid the minimum wage for 40 hours weekly, regardless of how much I work. Not only do I not receive overtime, I am not paid anything for any hours I work beyond 40. On multiple occasions, they have arrived home quite late from their work day, when I started at 7am. I hope you can pass this legislation, considering that our work with children is one that requires much resilience, wisdom and patience, and that our work is a great help to parents. Thank you.

Carmen Cifuentes