



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department
Office of Governor Deval L. Patrick
Press Release**

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GOVERNOR PATRICK SIGNS DOMESTIC WORKERS BILL OF RIGHTS LEGISLATION

Bill Provides Basic Labor Protections for Home Workers

BOSTON – Wednesday, July 2, 2014 - Governor Deval Patrick today hosted a ceremonial bill signing for S.2132, “An Act Establishing a Domestic Worker’s Bill of Rights.” The bill extends basic work standards and labor protections to approximately 67,000 nannies, housekeepers, care givers and other home workers. The Governor officially signed the bill into law on June 26.

“Domestic workers represent an important segment of our workforce and are important to the Massachusetts economy,” said Governor Patrick. “This bill ensures they have the same basic workplace rights that we guarantee other workers in Massachusetts.”

“I am proud of the Legislature for taking action to extend the same rights and protections to all workers in the Commonwealth,” said Senate President Therese Murray. “This bill makes the necessary changes to cut down on potential for abuse and clarify responsibilities in the workplace. As a result, we are closer to achieving our standards of ensuring a more fair environment for our domestic workers.”

The bill guarantees that domestic workers get breaks for meals and rest, termination notices, and work evaluations. It also clarifies their work duties and state laws regarding what deductions employers can make for food and lodging. The Attorney General’s Office has been charged with enforcing the bill of rights once it goes into effect April 1, 2015.

“Domestic workers by the very nature of their jobs are isolated, and are often unaware of their rights,” said Attorney General Martha Coakley. “All workers deserve to be paid fairly and to enjoy basic workplace standards. This law will help to ensure that these workers and their employers are aware of the rights now afforded to them.”

“Domestic workers often are poorly paid and vulnerable to discrimination and poor working conditions,” said Labor and Workforce Secretary Rachel Kaprielian. “This bill ensures they have at the very least, basic workplace rights.”

The law also ensures that domestic workers are protected from discrimination and sexual harassment and brings their employers under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

“Today, we take another step forward by signing into effect legislation that will provide both a necessary and comprehensive set of rights and privileges for our Commonwealth’s Domestic Workers,” said Senator Anthony Petrucci. “I am honored to have had the opportunity to assist in the passage of this bill.”

“The Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights ensures that nannies, house cleaners and personal care attendants are treated with respect,” said Representative Michael Moran. “I’ve been personally touched by the stories of abuse that have been shared with me. I am proud the Commonwealth is able to make history today and ensure this type of abuse never happens again in our state.”

“The Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights corrects a long-standing injustice by extending essential protections to the workers who care for the homes and loved ones of Massachusetts’ residents,” said Boston Mayor Martin Walsh. “My mother did domestic work as a young immigrant, and I am all too aware of the way that existing law devalued the work of women, immigrants, and people of color. The new law recognizes that these workers do vital, skilled, productive work that our economy depends on. I’m grateful for the leading role that Boston’s legislators played in advancing this bill.”

“On behalf of the Massachusetts Coalition for Domestic Workers, we are so appreciative that the Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights law will guarantee domestic workers basic workplace standards including 24 hours off per 7-day calendar week, maternity leave, and enforceable protection from discrimination, sexual harassment, illegal charges for food and lodging, eviction of live-in domestic workers without notice and from retaliation for asserting wage violations,” said Monica Halas, Greater Boston Legal Services Lead Attorney.

Massachusetts joins three other states, New York, California and Hawaii, in passing labor protections for domestic workers. The Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards will develop a multilingual outreach program to educate the Commonwealth’s domestic workers about their rights.

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