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Governor David Paterson
Executive Chamber, Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

A Better Balance: The Work and Family Legal Center is a legal advocacy organization dedicated to insuring that working families can care for their families without sacrificing their economic security. In particular, we believe that caregiving is undervalued in our society and that all caregivers deserve respect and support. We fully support the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, S.2311-E (Savino)/A.1470-B (Wright), which was delivered to your office on August 19, 2010. We urge you to sign it into law.

Everyday, over 200,000 domestic workers make all other work possible in New York. They care for the most important elements of their employer's lives: their families and homes, in addition to caring for their own families. Yet, they work without respect, recognition, or basic labor rights. Isolated in homes, scattered throughout the state, domestic workers have no power to negotiate for the most basic benefits and risk losing their jobs at the whim of their employers. Behind the closed doors of their employers' homes, domestic workers have endured some of the worst abuses imaginable – unjust firings, long hours without overtime or a day off, no holidays or vacation, no time off to see a doctor, verbal, emotional and physical abuse.

It is a scandal that domestic workers have been excluded from labor laws that protect almost all other workers in the United States. The passage of the bill extending the most basic labor protections to domestic workers is long overdue. We thank you, in advance of signing this historic bill into law, for helping New York to lead the way in recognizing domestic workers and providing much-needed rights and protections.

Sincerely,

Sherry Leiwant

Executive Director