PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ON OCT 4, 2018

Media Contact: Katrina L. Rogers, Kalaro Media
katrina@kalaromedia.com
504-383-5212

GROUNDBREAKING REPORT FINDS VULNERABLE CONDITIONS FACING BLACK DOMESTIC WORKERS IN THE SOUTH

In the 2018 “Year of the Woman,” report reveals how much still needs to be done for Black women workers

Read the report here

Atlanta, GA -- A new report published today reveals systemic wage theft, vulnerability to sexual harassment, and lack of basic workplace protections facing Black domestic workers in the South, while highlighting the historical legacy of slavery and the interplay between racial and gender-based disparities in cities like Durham, NC, and Atlanta, GA.

Pay, Professionalism & Respect: Black Domestic Workers Continue the Call for Standards in the Care Industry was authored by the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) and its We Dream in Black program, and the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) and its Black Worker Initiative. It features data and interviews with dozens of nannies, house cleaners, and care workers in Durham and Atlanta (see findings below).

The two-volume report comes at a moment when women of color are a driving force behind the progressive movement. Past reports have shown that Black women have the highest turnout rates out of all demographic groups, with more Black women than ever running for political office in 2018. Yet, Black women, who make up a third of the national care workforce, also have the highest poverty rate of any ethnic group other than indigenous women, especially in the South.

“We cannot talk about the future of our democracy and economy in America without talking about the leadership of Black domestic workers,” said Alicia Garza, the Strategy + Partnerships Director for the National Domestic Workers Alliance. “Black women have already tipped elections this year in Virginia and Alabama. Our lawmakers can no longer ignore the workplace standards of the domestic workforce without losing the vote of Black women voters.”

“We are compromising the quality of our care, the vitality of our economy and our humanity when we allow workers in a growing industry to be underpaid and at risk of abuse and career-ending injuries,” said Kimberly Freeman Brown, author of Pay, Professionalism & Respect, as well as three other reports on the experiences and leadership of women of
color. “It’s time to end the historic racial and gender bias that has resulted in the conditions these women endure. It’s time to care for caregivers.”

“No one should have to work three or four jobs just to make ends meet, to pay bills, to have a car to get back and forth to work, to have a roof over their head,” said Priscilla Smith, a home care worker and leader with We Dream in Black in Durham. “Raising wages is a good start, but more than that. It’s about respect. It’s about access to health care. And it’s about recognizing the labor of Black women.”

“I’ve worked 10 hour days getting paid less than $6 per hour. I was hired as a nanny, but expected to do everything: cleaning the garage, all of the laundry, even outdoor work,” said Nilaja Fabien, a childcare worker and leader with We Dream in Black in Atlanta. “Right now, Black domestic workers are making history in Georgia. We’re knocking on doors in the most diverse neighborhoods. We’re registering voters in parks and at events. We’re making sure that Black women and women of color have a voice in our democracy.”

Out of those surveyed in Atlanta
- 72% of those surveyed made less than $30,000, 67% reported not making enough to cover living expenses
- 82% receive public assistance
- 94% reported workplace concerns such as: low wages, workplace injuries or health and safety issues, asked to do work different from original hired job, lack of employer benefits, lack of training, asked to work more than scheduled hours, no paid time off
- 55% reported working while sick, and 20% reported canceling a medical appointment because of work
- 67% did not have work contracts

Out of those surveyed in Durham
- 91% made less than $30,000, 76% reported not making enough to cover living expenses
- 59% receive public assistance
- 95% reported workplace concerns such as: low wages, workplace injuries or health and safety issues, asked to do work different from original hired job, lack of employer benefits, lack of training, asked to work more than scheduled hours, no paid time off
- 57% reported working while sick, and 30% reported canceling a medical appointment because of work
- 64% did not have work contracts

Pay, Professionalism & Respect is being released at two press events in Durham and Atlanta attended by hundreds of domestic workers and allies, including Georgia State House Representative David Dreyer (D-59) and LaTosha Brown, Co-founder of the Black Voters Matter Fund.

###

About National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Domestic Workers Alliance is the nation’s leading voice for dignity and fairness for millions of domestic workers in the United States. Follow on Twitter: @domesticworkers
About We Dream in Black
*We Dream in Black* is a program of the National Domestic Workers Alliance that is designed to build the organizing and movement building capacity of Black diasporic domestic workers.

About Institute for Policy Studies
As Washington’s first progressive multi-issue think tank, the *Institute for Policy Studies* (IPS) has served as a policy and research resource for visionary social justice movements for more than four decades.

About the Black Worker Initiative
The *Black Worker Initiative* is a bold and exciting new effort launched by the Institute for Policy Studies, which is deeply committed to helping achieve both the historic and contemporary aims of the labor and civil rights movements.