

JUST WORDS

The Stories of Working People In Our Community

Episode 9: Gloria Knight

Welcome to Just Words—the stories of working people in our community.

Gloria Knight is a child care provider in Prince George’s County. In 2005, an accident left her with a 50 thousand dollar hospital bill. Like thousands of other child care providers in the stat, she’s unable to afford health insurance. Faced with a 50k hospital bill, she thought about leaving childcare.

But then I thought about...there are other providers, who need NOT to go through that I went through.

Family child care providers have formed unions in several states. Not all childcare providers in Maryland agree that the benefits of unionizing will outweigh the costs, but Gloria believes it will.

I feel like the union will be a plus because it will be someone to have your back, someone who can go to bat for you, someone with your interests at heart. SEIU wants to come in and get a union so we can negotiate benefits that would be helpful to day care provider, like health insurance, number one. That’s the number one issue, health insurance.

Health insurance is the number one concern, but there is also the matter of pensions, and the issue of how much providers are paid by the state.

There’s certain parts of MD where providers are paid more by the state than in other areas, and that is one of the issues we are going to put on the floor once we have the opportunity to form a union. From what I understand, Montgomery County, the providers there get paid more than in Temple Hills area, which is Prince George’s. And the same with Baltimore. Baltimore’s Maryland. Some of the providers in Baltimore get paid less than in Prince Georges. We as providers feel like the state of Maryland should be across the board for childcare. Children is first in our lives, so, children is first in Temple hills, just like children is first is Montgomery County, just like children is first in Fort Washington, children is first throughout state of Maryland, so why not treat us fair and give us the same amount of money, because we all doing the same job.

Those fighting for a union for child care workers in Maryland still have a way to go. A bill granting them the right to form a union must be passed in Annapolis—a similar bill saw defeat last year. And even if they do win the right to form a union, the majority of providers in the state might ultimately vote NO. And then there are those who worry that it could raise the cost of childcare for the working poor. But Gloria’s story demonstrates that by joining together, people can bring their voices to the halls of power and be heard.

Music: Black Eyed Peas , *Union*

Produced by Jessica Phillips. Hosted by Marc Steiner.

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