

# REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE, IMMIGRATION, AND COUNTING THE CARING ECONOMY

NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN WOMEN'S FORUM



[napawf.org](http://napawf.org)

# WHAT IS REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE?

- **1994:** Response to the pro-choice movement being dominated by the voices of white middle-class women
- An intersectional approach towards sexual and reproductive health
- Acknowledges and integrates the physical, economic, institutional, and social factors that affect a person's ability to make choices about their body



# THE AREAS OF REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

## ■ Reproductive Health

- Focuses on minimizing reproductive health disparities
- Increasing access to health service, information, and delivery

## ■ Reproductive Rights

- Focuses on ensuring people always have the right to choose when it comes to their reproductive choices
- Advocating, litigating, lobbying, and policy work

## ■ Reproductive Justice

- Focuses on dismantling the institutional and societal power inequalities at the root of reproductive oppression
- Works to effect long-lasting institutional change



# WHO ARE DOMESTIC CARE WORKERS?

- Overwhelmingly **immigrant** and **women of color**
- Paid well below prevailing wage rates
- Do not receive benefits or legal protections
- Often viewed as easily replaceable
- Often hired by subcontractors who take little responsibility for their working conditions
- Have little power and frequently change employers or occupations



# IMMIGRANT WOMEN

- In 2011, 51.1 percent of all foreign-born individuals residing in the United States—and 55 percent of all people obtaining a green card—were women
- Women comprised 48 percent of all refugee arrivals and 49 percent of people granted asylum
- Women are 54 percent of all people who naturalize and become citizens
- Deeply value family and family unity



# IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

- From 2002-2009 Immigrants contributed an estimated \$115 billion more to Medicare trust fund than they took out
- Approximately 60 percent of undocumented women are in the labor force, other 40 percent do care work in the home
  - Proof of employment (such as a W-2) is required to apply for legal status, leaving out thousands of women and devaluing their work
- Start businesses at higher rates than American-born women
- Make up 46 percent of the domestic workforce
- “Female migrants are disproportionately affected by the phenomena of deskilling and downgrading”
  - Forced to take jobs for which they are over-educated or otherwise overqualified

Nadasen and Williams, “Valuing Domestic Work” Fall 2009



# API IMMIGRANT WOMEN

- **AAPI is fastest growing immigrant population in the US**
  - Of 11 million undocumented immigrants, 1.3 million are AAPI
- **Historically discriminated against despite contributions to US**
- **Face unique barriers in accessing reproductive health services**
  - Lack of adequate culturally or linguistically competent health care and services



# NOT ALL ROSY FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN

- Immigrant women have limited channels for entering the country
  - 70 percent of immigrant women obtain legal status through a family based visa
- As a result, many women are forced to enter the country through dangerous methods, are often trafficked and exploited
- Immigrant women are made more vulnerable to violence, especially those of undocumented status
  - Higher risk for reproductive health problems
  - 33 percent of domestic workers in NYC had experienced some sort of physical or verbal abuse



# REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH DISPARITIES FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN

- Decreased likelihood of accessing preventive reproductive health care services, including counseling, Pap tests, and testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Decreased likelihood of using an effective method of contraception and of using contraception consistently
- Disproportionately high rates of unintended pregnancies, teen pregnancies, and abortions
- Disproportionately high rates of HPV and resulting cervical cancer
- Heightened risks of domestic violence and staying in abusive relations, and of experiencing sexual abuse



# IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND REFORM: A REPRODUCTIVE JUSTIVE ISSUE

- Lack of access to health insurance, federal, state, and preventative healthcare
- The Five-Year Waiting Period
- ... And now the **15 Year Waiting Period**
- Millions of immigrant women remain ineligible for comprehensive maternity coverage
- Immigration Detention Facilities
- Military service in the DREAM Act



# COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

- Women in the informal economy have traditionally been left without a pathway to citizenship
- The Senate bill acknowledges these women
  - NAPAWF, WRC, Latina Institute came together to push the Senate to consider these women
- Women Primary Caregivers given 10 points in the Merit-Based track to RPI Status
- Increased protections for survivors of violence and worker's rights
- Asylum processing is made more fair
- Spouses and children get much improved treatment
- New Family "V" Visa



# AND NOW TO THE HOUSE TO DESTROY THE BILL

- A piecemeal, enforcement first approach to passing immigration reform
  - Prioritize border security over a pathway to legal status
- Pathway to citizenship is at least two years longer and more arduous than the one in the Senate's bill
- A much narrower version of the DREAM Act
- Cut a lot of the pieces of the Senate bill that looked out for women and their families
- Five individual immigration bills have passed out of the Judiciary and Homeland Security committees
  - GOP leadership has yet to bring any of them to the floor for a vote
- All for a “**watered down**” and “costly” end plan



# WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN

- Immigrant women (in domestic work) overwhelmingly lack access to healthcare and healthcare coverage
  - 5 year wait period, or 15 year wait period
  - Lack of culturally and linguistically competent services
- Immigrant women are less likely to receive adequate reproductive health care
  - Cervical and breast cancer screening and treatment, family planning services, HIV/AIDS testing and treatment, and accurate sex education
- Family separation
- Cannot raise their families in the environment of their choosing with dignity and respect
- Dangerous working conditions
  - Nail salon workers



# MAKES SENSE RIGHT?

- Substantial money to be saved from:
  - Treating illnesses early
  - Preventing outbreaks of communicable diseases
  - Screening for treatable chronic illnesses
  - Vaccinating to prevent disease
- Immigrant rights are human rights: Pass comprehensive immigration reform that treats all people humanely and equally!
- Domestic Worker's Bill of Rights



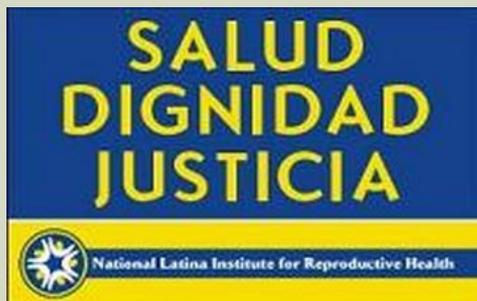
# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



[WWW.NAPAWF.ORG](http://WWW.NAPAWF.ORG)



[WWW.DOMESTICWORKERS.ORG](http://WWW.DOMESTICWORKERS.ORG)



[WWW.LATINAINSTITUTE.ORG](http://WWW.LATINAINSTITUTE.ORG)