

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2019

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS PARTNERS WITH THE NAIL SALON WORKERS ASSOCIATION TO EDUCATE NAIL SALON WORKERS ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS AS PART OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NEW YORK, NY – Department of Consumer Affairs in collaboration with Workers United's New York Nail Salon Workers Association (NYNSWA) and as part of Women's History Month, assist nail salon workers in educating other nail salon workers across the city about their workplace rights. [Research](#) indicates that more than 80 percent of nail salon workers in the United States are women—and 79 percent are foreign-born—and that many often face workplace conditions that threaten their health and exploit their labor, including not being allowed to use sick leave. Teams have visit 100 nail salons in Staten Island and Queens and will be visiting retail corridors in the Bronx on Tuesday, March 12.

“Oftentimes, vulnerable workers don't realize their rights as employees and sacrifice their safety to make a living for themselves and their families,” said **DCA Commissioner Lorelei Salas**. “DCA is committed to making sure that all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, are protected by workplace laws. It is crucial that nail salon workers are aware of their rights and that employers know their responsibilities to ensure a healthy and safe working environment.”

“We, nail salon workers, are the ones that know the reality of how we are affected working in salons that are run by owners that don't respect our rights, despite there being laws already in place,” said **Yanelia Ramirez, nail salon worker at Envy for almost 10 years and member of the 700 member-led NYNSWA**. “Having to work 40 hours or more and still not know if we are going to make enough money at the end of the week to pay our bills frustrates us. We have decided to take action and educate ourselves on our rights and organize despite whatever fear tactics are used against us because we believe nail salon workers deserve to work with dignity and respect.”

DCA's Office of Labor Policy & Standards (OLPS) recently released "[Advances and Setbacks in Turbulent Times: Second Annual Report on the State of Workers' Rights in NYC](#)," which found that workers in the nail salon industry have grave concerns about their physical health and safety due to inadequate workplace safety standards. They are often exposed to chemicals through ingestion, inhalation, and skin absorption. The report also found that wage theft is a prevalent issue in the industry. Several workers testified that many nail salon workers do not earn minimum wage, are not paid overtime, and do not receive meal breaks. Many workers and advocates stressed that the confusing tipped wage system facilitates wage theft by giving employers opportunities to appropriate tips before they reach employees and by making it harder for workers to keep track of how much pay they are actually owed.

The teams are distributing the [Workers' Bill of Rights](#), [What Salon Employees Need to Know](#), the [Bill of Rights for Nail Salon Workers](#), and the most recent minimum wage form to nail salon workers and employers. The Workers' Bill of Rights is offered in 12 languages and provides a breakdown of workers' rights by industry and worker-specific protections, including Paid Safe and Sick Leave, wages, and discrimination.

OLPS is the largest municipal labor standards office in the country with a robust staff of attorneys, investigators, outreach and education specialists, as well as research and policy analysts. DCA enforces, implements, and works on the development of a new generation of minimum labor standards for a stronger city, focuses on ensuring all workers can realize these rights, regardless of immigration status, and embraces its mandate to focus on issues affecting immigrants, people of color, women, and other populations that face vulnerabilities in the workplace.

DCA enforces a number of municipal workplace laws, including the Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law, the Freelance Isn't Free Act, Commuter Benefits Law, the Living and Prevailing Wage Laws, the Grocery Workers Retention Act, and the Fair Workweek Law. NYC's labor workplace laws apply to all covered employees regardless of immigration status. Employers cannot punish, penalize, retaliate, or take any action against employees that might stop or deter them from exercising their rights, and workers can file a complaint online at nyc.gov/workers or by calling 311. Complaints can be filed anonymously.

The New York Nail Salon Workers Association (NYNSWA), comprised of over 700 worker members, works to transform the conditions in nail salons across New York State to ensure that workers' dignity and health are respected in their workplace. Since NYNSWA's founding in 2016, it has helped pass a new New York state law to require ventilation in nail salons; educated members around wage and hour law, health and safety, unions, and immigration; and established the first not-for-profit nail salon school in New York, offering an economical option for workers to obtain their license. NYNSWA is part of the Workers United New York/New Jersey Regional Joint Board.

The NYC Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) protects and enhances the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to create thriving communities. DCA licenses more than 81,000 businesses in more than 50 industries and enforces key consumer protection, licensing, and workplace laws that apply to countless more. By supporting businesses through equitable enforcement and access to resources and, by helping to resolve complaints, DCA protects the marketplace from predatory practices and strives to create a culture of compliance. Through its community outreach and the work of its offices of Financial Empowerment and Labor Policy & Standards, DCA empowers consumers and working families by providing the tools and resources they need to be educated consumers and to achieve financial health and work-life balance. DCA also conducts research and advocates for public policy that furthers its work to support New York City's communities. For more information about DCA and its work, call 311 or visit DCA at nyc.gov/dca or on its social media sites, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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