

Allies Statements on Harris v. Quinn Decision

The White House; Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez; Senator Tom Harkin, Chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee; The Progressive Caucus; Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi; Senator Bob Casey, Chair of the Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety; Americans United for Change; The Center for Community Change; the National Employment Law Project; USAction; Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley; Center for American Progress; National Domestic Workers Alliance; and Caring Across Generations have spoken out against the decision rendered by the Supreme Court yesterday on Harris v. Quinn.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

Statement by the Press Secretary on Harris v. Quinn

Collective bargaining is a fundamental right that helped build America's middle class. The ability of public servants to collectively bargain is crucial to ensuring both a fair day's pay for a hard day's work and the high quality service citizens expect and deserve from their government.

For almost 40 years, the Supreme Court has held that the First Amendment allows state and local governments to require employees to pay a fair share of a union's expenses for representing that worker. We are disappointed that the Supreme Court has carved out a group of workers – homecare workers who provide critical support to the elderly and people with disabilities in their own homes.

The collective bargaining model in Illinois resulted in fairer pay and benefits for hardworking caregivers as well as improved training, safety and health protections, and tools to help those who need care to find it. The Court's decision will not only make it significantly harder for these dedicated employees to get a fair shake in exchange for their hard work, but will make it harder for states and cities to ensure the elderly and Americans with disabilities get the care they need and deserve.

The Administration remains committed to defending collective bargaining rights.

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Statement by US Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez on *Harris v. Quinn* Supreme Court ruling

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez issued the following statement today regarding the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Harris v. Quinn* decision:

“Home care workers do heroic work, providing high-quality, compassionate care that allows seniors and people with disabilities to live at home with independence and dignity.

“By organizing together, these workers have improved both their own working conditions and the quality of services they provide. The demand for skilled home care workers will only increase as the population ages and more people require these services.

“Today’s Supreme Court decision will make it more difficult for home care workers to have a united voice and the support they need to best serve their clients. We can and will continue to work in partnership with home care workers, consumers, employers, unions and states to ensure both good jobs and quality home care.”

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Harkin Statement on Supreme Court Ruling in *Harris v. Quinn*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, released the following statement today following the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Harris v. Quinn*.

“Since 1977, public sector workers who receive strong wages and safer working conditions from collectively bargained contracts have been asked to contribute their fair share in exchange for the benefits they receive from union representation. They do not have to fund a union’s political activities. Non-union workers who benefit from a union, however, cannot free ride on the backs of other workers without helping to cover the costs of collective bargaining.

“Though the court correctly declined to depart from well-settled law and directly contradict the precedent set in *Abood*, today’s ruling is disappointing nonetheless because the Court refused to extend *Abood*’s basic principle of fairness to the personal care providers in this case.

“The workers and people that they care for affected by this ruling have already seen vast improvements because of their association with a union. A contract gives workers better wages and working conditions, provides a stable workforce to provide quality care to our families, friends, and neighbors, and is good for our country’s economy. Though today’s ruling did not overturn settled law, it will make it needlessly harder for our country to reap the benefits that flow from an organized, democratic workplace.”

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Progressive Caucus Statement on Decision in Harris v. Quinn

WASHINGTON— Co-Chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) Reps. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) and Keith Ellison (D-MN) released [the following statement](#) today after the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Harris v. Quinn* made it harder for home health care workers to collectively bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions.

“Stagnant wages and increased income inequality have made it critical for workers to join forces in their fight for a decent living. The right to organize means workers can stand together for respect on the job.

“Today’s narrow ruling is disappointing, but it doesn’t stop home health care workers, who are subject to some of the worst labor conditions in the United States, from organizing. It’s unacceptable that home health agencies rank among the most profitable industries and at the same time oppose paying their employees overtime or even minimum wage. These workers provide essential services to seniors and people with disabilities in our country - they deserve a fair paycheck.

“Organizing is the most effective way for working Americans to stand up to corporations who want to lead a race to the bottom for working conditions and wages. This case is a clear attempt to open the door to future attacks on public sector workers. We must remain vigilant and support workers organizing for higher wages and better working conditions.”

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Pelosi Statement on Harris v. Quinn Supreme Court Decision

San Francisco – Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi released [the following statement](#) on the Harris v. Quinn Supreme Court decision:

“The Harris v. Quinn decision is just the latest attempt to erode the rights of hard-working Americans to come together and bargain for the wages and benefits they’ve earned.

“Strong unions are essential to the health and strength of the American worker, ensuring that a hard day’s work earns a fair day’s pay. Yet across the country, we see powerful interests trying to undermine the unions that serve as the foundation of the middle class – the backbone of our democracy.

“This decision is nothing less than an effort to divide and conquer working people. No court case, however, will stop home care workers from standing together and fighting for good jobs and quality home care. It’s time for Republicans and their special interest friends to stop stepping on the backs of hard working families and come together with Democrats to create jobs, and affirm the fundamental American respect for the worth of work. In Congress and across the country, we will continue to press for an economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthy.”

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Casey Statement on Supreme Court Decision in *Harris v. Quinn*

Washington, D.C- Today, U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), Chair of the Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety, issued a statement following the United States Supreme Court decision in *Harris v. Quinn*:

This morning’s Supreme Court decision in *Harris v. Quinn* maintains public sector employees’ contribution of fair share dues to support collective bargaining activities.

I am pleased that while a majority of the Court carved an exemption for specific workers, it denied the attempts of right-wing activists to overturn precedent and the laws of 26 states, which could have hurt the ability of teachers, police officers, firefighters and other public sector workers to collectively stand up for their rights and for fair wages.

That being said, it is hard to comprehend the majority opinion when Illinois home care workers have clearly benefited from collective bargaining as Justice Kagan’s dissent makes clear: “Because of that bargaining, as the majority acknowledges, home-care assistants have nearly doubled their wages in less than 10 years, obtained state-funded health insurance, and benefited from better training and workplace safety measures.” The State has also benefited by getting “a more stable workforce providing higher quality care, thereby avoiding the costs involved with institutionalization.”

As wages of many workers are stagnant and their interests are overlooked, any attempt to weaken their ability to bargain collectively for family wages and safer working conditions is troubling.

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AUFC Reacts to *Harris v. Quinn* SCOTUS Ruling: While The Corporate Court Sticks It to the Little Guy Once Again, Labor Will Fight on to Build an Economy from the Middle Out

Washington DC – Americans United for Change condemned the decision made today by the Supreme Court in *Harris v. Quinn*, ruling 5-4 that partial-public employees like home care providers who are non-union are not required to make ‘fair-share payments’ to unions that are bargaining on their behalf for improved wages and benefits. AUFC President Brad Woodhouse issued the following statement:

“It’s another banner day for the Supreme Court that brought us unlimited Corporate spending in our elections. Corporate CEOs like the Koch brothers are on a constant lookout for ways to chip away the rights of workers to collectively bargain for fair wages, decent benefits, and safe working conditions, and *Harris v Quinn* was their latest vehicle of assault. The right-wing Justices of the court were all too happy to stick it the little guy once again – in this case, to home health care providers. These are people that do incredibly tough jobs ensuring our growing elderly population are properly cared for and live with dignity. But these homecare workers’ ability to negotiate better wages so they too can live better lives has been severely compromised with this decision. Corporate CEO’s who want to see an end to all unions are celebrating today because they think this ruling gets them one step closer to removing all that stops them from shipping jobs overseas, paying pitiful wages, and cutting corners on safety. But they would be wrong.

"While this overreach by the Corporate Court is a setback for workers’ rights, it will serve as a rallying cry for workers everywhere who want to bargain collectively. It will turn out more voters who believe an economy should work for everyone -- not just Wall Street -- to support lawmakers who understand the role organized labor plays in building the middle class in this country. The labor movement in this country has survived such corporate and right wing assaults in the past - and with the power of millions of middle class workers it will survive this misguided ruling as well."

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Center for Community Change Vows to Support Caregivers in Their Fight for Good Jobs and Quality Home Care

(WASHINGTON)-The Center for Community Change (CCC) vowed to support caregivers in their fight for good jobs and quality home care despite the roadblock thrown in their way by today's *Harris v. Quinn* decision handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court. Today's ruling puts at risk a system of consumer-directed home care in Illinois that has provided higher wages, affordable health care benefits and more training for these workers.

"No court ruling will ever dampen the spirit and the will of workers in their efforts to join together to improve their jobs, their working conditions and their rights," said Mary Lassen, CCC's managing director. "The Center will continue to work with our allies in labor and partners nationwide to support home care workers who contribute so much to the quality of life for those who need their support."

"Workers have won improvements by organizing unions and having the power to gain benefits that many workers take for granted now, like paid sick days, paid vacation days and a 40-hour work week," Lassen added. "Protecting workers' rights and their ability to form and sustain strong unions are essential in this time of rampant income inequality, low wages and poor working conditions."

"The need for home care workers has increased and as more people take on these very important jobs their demand for adequate job protection will only grow stronger, and their voices should not be ignored," Lassen said.

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On the U.S. Supreme Court's Decision in *Harris v. Quinn*

NELP Decries Decision Diluting Home Care Workers' Fundamental Workplace Bargaining Capacity

Washington, DC – By a 5-4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court today held in *Harris v. Quinn* that the State of Illinois cannot require home care workers who object to joining a union democratically elected by their colleagues to pay a fair-share fee for the benefits they receive from that representation.

"In a majority opinion that parses the relationship between the 'customer' receiving care, the personal assistant providing the care, and the state paying for the care, the court's holding that non-members may not be required to pay a fair-share fee does not reflect an even balancing of the scales of justice. Instead, on every question, the court elevated the interests of the minority objecting to paying their fair share over those of the majority who had democratically elected a union and the State that had concluded this form of representation was in the best interest of all parties," said Christine Owens, executive director of the National Employment Law Project. "In dismissing the role the fair-share fee plays in advancing important economic and health care interests in Illinois and elsewhere,

the court showed indifference to how labor-management relations can be properly and lawfully constructed to promote meaningful worker input into issues affecting their employment and the service they provide. And in distinguishing between 'full-fledged' public employees and workers paid by the state to care for private citizens, the court completely ignores the growth and evolution of the home care labor force and the importance of ensuring adequate protections for workers who provide extraordinary service. Far from helping to create good jobs and provide good care for the elderly and disabled, the court's decision will make it harder to achieve these important societal and economic objectives.

"Public sector workers like the home care workers in Illinois will continue to pull together and fight for good jobs and quality care, but undermining their capacity to achieve full and fair representation for all within the bargaining unit will compromise working conditions and the quality of care in this fast-growing sector."

In the meantime, NELP called on the administration to hold to its promise to the 2.5 million home care workers still waiting for basic fair-pay protections.

"The Obama administration should reaffirm its commitment to protecting the rights of home care workers and the communities they serve by sticking to its previously announced January 1, 2015 implementation date for the long-awaited federal companionship worker regulations," said Owens. "These new rules finally extend basic federal minimum wage and overtime protections to the millions of workers who care for seniors and people with disabilities living independently in their homes. Any delay of their implementation is simply unacceptable."

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USAction Statement on Harris v. Quinn Supreme Court Decision

"The US Supreme Court's extreme views will not stop workers from coming together to fight for our rights inside the workplace and quality services in our communities. USAction stands with our brothers and sisters to have the freedom to choose to come together to make our communities strong against greedy CEO's that only care about their profits and pay packages."

Washington, DC – Americans are ready to stand up for good jobs and will continue to have a strong voice for the middle class across the country in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Harris v. Quinn today.

“No court case will stand in the way of working people coming together to have their voices heard to make real change in our communities,” said Fred Azcarate, Executive Director of USAction.

The National Right to Work Foundation, an extreme anti-worker group, whose founders include billionaires like Charles Koch and the Walton family, brought this case. It is the latest effort to attack workers rights and freedoms to choose if they want to collectively come together to improve their lives and the communities that they serve.

Fred Azcarate added, “USAction stands with our brothers and sisters that fight for quality services in home care, an industry that its workers are paid low wages for back breaking work. We believe in an economy that works for all of us – a cornerstone of that economy is the ability for workers to collectively bargain with their employers. Being able to have the freedom to join together in a strong collective voice is fairness plain and simple.”

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Maryland Governor Disappointed with Harris v. Quinn Decision

“We are still reviewing the details of the decision, but we are disappointed with the outcome,” Governor O’Malley told [The Washington Post](#).

“Maryland has derived enormous benefit from our home-care system, which includes collective bargaining,” O’Malley said. “Our system enables the state to accomplish important goals — like ensuring an adequate and well-training home-care workforce — and exclusive representation and fair-share fees play an important role in a fair and effective collective bargaining system.”

O’Malley said the state would try to keep its system “as much intact as possible’ after reviewing the court decision. There are about 8,300 home-care workers in Maryland, according to O’Malley’s office.

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STATEMENT: CAP’s Neera Tanden on Harris v. Quinn Decision

Washington, D.C. — Today, in response to the Supreme Court’s decision in *Harris v. Quinn*, which held that partial public employees cannot be required to pay union bargaining fees, Center for American Progress President Neera Tanden issued the [following statement](#):

Today's *Harris v. Quinn* decision is the latest Roberts Court attack on important protections for hard-working Americans that sides with wealthy special interests in weakening worker protections. This decision may be limited to those who the Supreme Court deems not fully public-sector workers, but it is clear the Court is willing to wield the First Amendment as a weapon to hurt workers. The *Harris v. Quinn* decision is a blow to working families; at a time when wages are stagnant, weakening worker protections is the exact opposite of what we should be doing. Today's decision will strengthen our resolve to ensure that middle-class families have a strong voice for good jobs and workplace protections.

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National Domestic Workers Alliance [Statement](#) on the Harris vs. Quinn Supreme Court Case Decision

On Monday, June 30, 2014, the Supreme Court made a decision that threatens the fundamental right of state-funded home care workers in Illinois to make progress towards living wage jobs. The organization of home care workers has occurred over the last 30 years, by workers who diligently organized to find a pathway out of poverty toward meaningful economic opportunity. As an undervalued, under-recognized workforce, their access to wages that lift them above the poverty line and access to critical workforce training and career ladders has been a result of organizing and working together.

Eighty-nine percent of home care workers are women, and 46% are people of color. The average wage of home care workers is \$16,800 and 46% must regularly rely on public benefits for survival. Through their hard work and care, home care workers enable millions of seniors and people with disabilities to live independently in their homes and communities. They offer peace of mind to millions of families who count on them to ensure the safety, health and well being of their loved ones. By valuing caregivers, we value the dignity of people with disabilities and elders who need caregiving assistance to live independent, full lives.

This decision comes at unique moment. Every day, 10,000 people turn 65 in America. As a result of advances in health care and technology, people are living longer than ever. We are going to need millions more home care workers to support our rapidly growing population of older adults. We should be focused on making these jobs quality jobs for the future, with better wages, and more support. Now more than ever, organizing will be critical, as it will ensure dignity for this growing workforce and their families and stable, quality care for seniors and people with disabilities who want to live independently at home.

Domestic workers work behind closed doors in homes across the country. We know all too well that home care workers' isolation can lead to vulnerability, abuse and exploitation. Having the ability to come together and organize with consumers and employers will be key to building the 21st century care workforce this country needs. Now is the time for real

solutions with care givers at the forefront of this change. Despite this decision, we are confident that home care workers, domestic workers, and all of the important low-wage workers who provide the invisible infrastructure upon which our economy rests, will continue to organize to make these jobs quality jobs of the future.

Andrea Cristina Mercado
Campaign Director
National Domestic Workers Alliance

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Caring Across statement on Harris v. Quinn

Today's Supreme Court decision in the *Harris v. Quinn* case has made it more difficult for parents and grandparents in Illinois to secure the quality care they need to live independently in their homes. Quality care begins by ensuring quality jobs, and one cannot be separated from the other.

Every day, 10,000 Americans turn 65. Ninety percent of Americans would prefer to stay in their own homes as they live longer rather than receive care in a facility. And to do that, we need a well-trained, stable home care workforce.

States meeting the challenges of an aging population should be supported in the steps they are taking to ensure that consumers and their families can find trained, qualified caregivers. By valuing caregivers, we value the dignity of people with disabilities and elders who need caregiving assistance to live full lives.

[Caring Across Generations](#) is more resolved than ever to propel the development of innovative long-term care options within both the public and private sectors that support independence, dignity and choice – and which strengthen our families, businesses, and the economy.

Caring Across Generations co-director and National Domestic Workers Alliance director Aijen Poo released the following statement:

"Today's Supreme Court decision in the *Harris v. Quinn* case has made it more difficult for parents and grandparents in Illinois to secure the quality care they need to live independently in their homes.

"A well-trained, stable workforce of homecare workers is essential if we are to give our loved ones the quality care they need and deserve.

"As more of us live longer, we need to create lasting solutions that truly value caregivers - and in turn, preserve people's choice to receive quality care at home. Today's ruling only increases the urgency with which we need to support states that are doing a good job of beginning to meet the needs of our aging population."

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