

My name is Alla Glasgow. I immigrated to the United States of America in 2008 when I was 20 years old. I came here alone with \$300 in my pocket, hoping for a better future and to experience the American dream. I worked very hard to learn English, to obtain a good education, and to stand up from my knees for myself, and for my future children.

In 2013, I went to a community college for my nursing degree. After I graduated, I worked multiple jobs for several years. I worked at the Bellevue Hospital as a critical care nurse, and as an ICU nurse at Christ Hospital in Jersey City. At the same time, I worked at two different medical spas, which provided aesthetic medical care. I found that my true passion was working as an aesthetic nurse injector. I dedicated myself to acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills. I found great joy in helping my patients feel better about themselves, empowering them to embrace their beauty. I was a committed worker and gave everything I had to my employer and to my patients.

I worked for over seven years at one particular medical spa, investing my utmost effort. After starting as a part time worker, I decided to make this spa my full-time job because I genuinely enjoyed working with my co-workers and my patients, many of whom became my friends over the years. I routinely worked long hours without proper breaks, even when I was pregnant, never getting a paid day off for personal reasons or for poor health. If I was sick, I worked extra days to make up for the days I missed. I was going above and beyond to contribute to the success of the spa and ensure patient satisfaction.

However, despite years of full time dedication and generating millions of dollars of profits for this company, they continued to pay me and treat me as an independent contractor, despite the fact that I was an employee in every single way, including by legal definitions. I was not given any benefits, any PTO, and was told I had to work every Saturday for several years, which I did.

In 2020, while pregnant and recovering from a severe case of COVID-19, I sent an email demanding the appropriate employment status and benefits that I had never received. In response, my employer offered me a job that promised the proper employment status and benefits, including paid time off. However, there was a condition attached: I had to sign a noncompete agreement. When I was three weeks away from giving birth to my son, in the middle of a busy workday, I was abruptly pulled out of a treatment room and asked to sign the "Offer of Employment" and a noncompete agreement. Trusting my employer, I believed that signing it would lead to the fulfillment of their promises, but it did not. They never held up their end of the agreement.

Their refusal to give me proper employment for another 1.5 years even after we signed the agreement in which they promised me this, along with recurring discrepancies in my pay and tips, left me feeling betrayed and I decided to stop working for this company. I finally decided enough was enough, I found a doctor who was a friend, who agreed to be my medical director and posted on instagram that I would be seeing patients in her office suites. I also made sure that her office was outside of the areas mentioned in the noncompete I signed, even though I understood that the noncompete was breached by my former employer and thus had no power. That same week, I received a threatening email from the former boss who I had trusted and respected, warning me that if I came back to New York, I would face a lawsuit.

I immediately consulted a lawyer. She assured me that because my former employer did not provide me with what the agreement said they would, it was null and void. I wanted to get a second opinion and consulted with another attorney who spoke to my employer's lawyer after they sent me a Cist and Desist notice. After some back and forth that lawyer disappeared and did not respond to my lawyer - as a result, my attorney advised me to proceed with my work. Therefore, I began working part-time in New York while residing in Texas, relishing the opportunity to take control of my finances and run my own business.

In September 2022, despite their lawyer having failed to respond to mine months ago, my former employer blindsided me with a lawsuit that targeted me and the facility where I worked. It was baseless and filled with lies, and yet, that lawsuit had a tremendous effect on my life and the life of my entire family, including my then two-year old son. I spent months defending myself, crying every single day. I went through many panic attacks and depression. I was told by my former colleagues that my former bosses were bragging about how they will sue me for millions of dollars and "leave me in my underwear". My heart breaks when I remember the look on my little son's face when he saw me in tears and went to hug me and said "mommy don't cry".

I hired 3 lawyers. I spent over 20 thousand dollars on attorney fees. Several attorneys I consulted with told me in a matter of fact way that I would likely win the lawsuit, but that it would cost me approximately 150k, so I should settle. So I had to learn the hard way that this is how the system works. I was shocked, but this is the reality.

I could not agree to the outrageous terms of the settlement proposed to me, I kept pushing and was finally able to find an attorney who agreed to take my case without charging me a fortune I did not have on an hourly basis. Since May last year when my former boss started to threaten me, I have spent many sleepless nights worrying and crying about this, spent many hours in therapy, watched my son develop anxiety because he was seeing me crushed and in tears a lot of the time. But given all this, I feel extremely lucky to be able to find the help and the support from my attorney and my loved ones. I know of former co-workers, many of whom are immigrant women like myself, who cannot or are too afraid to stand up for themselves. I will never stop fighting for my right to work, earn a living, and practice the profession I love - that's why I came to this country and that is why I am submitting my story to this committee..