

New study documents risks faced by New York state nail salon workers

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Key findings of a new Cornell University Worker Institute report mapping the low wages and poor working conditions of New York state's nail salon industry workers will be presented today (April 7) at a New

York City rally calling for passage of the Nail Salon Minimum Standards Council Act.

Professor Risa Lieberwitz, Worker Institute academic director, said, "This report reveals the harsh realities of the working conditions for nail salon workers. As importantly, the recommendations in the report—including raising standards through a sectoral approach—are aimed at improving working conditions in ways that fit the nature of the nail salon industry."

New York stands out nationwide for having the highest concentration of nail technicians, and for nail salon service prices that are significantly lower than the national average, according to the authors, Zoë West, Worker Institute affiliate researcher; Russell Weaver, ILR Buffalo Co-Lab research director, and KC Wagner, director of Workplace Issues.

"Unvarnished: Precarity and Poor Working Conditions for Nail Salon Workers in New York State" is based on an analysis of government data on the industry; focus groups with nail salon workers conducted in four languages; and a statewide survey of nail salons. The report examines state bills that followed 2015 worker advocacy and investigative reporting that put a spotlight on the nail industry and calls attention to the role of worker organizing and advocacy in driving industry change, recommending that access to training and awareness of workers' rights appear to make workers feel more empowered to speak out.

More information: The study is [available as a PDF](#).

Provided by Cornell University

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