

Early childhood educators partner with Union and Workers' Centre, score historic victory ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

On May 1st at the Statehouse, Vermont early childhood educator Kay Curtis led 800 people chanting "union power is on the rise, now's the time to organize." Five days later, she and her fellow 1,400 low-wage early childhood educators - primarily women - midwived historic legislation, expanding Vermont labor law and allowing these previously excluded workers to form their union.

Just as with 7,500 low-wage Vermont homecare providers who announced their first contract at the same May 1st Vermont Workers' Center rally, the early educators' victory demonstrates labor's changed fortunes when workers and unions partner with Workers' Centers to build a 21st century labor movement.

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), celebrated with the Vermont child-care providers, saying, "This is a great step in a long-term effort by early childhood educators to secure a voice to strengthen their profession and advocate on behalf of the children and families they serve. Now, early child-care providers in Vermont will have the opportunity to organize and win a stronger voice. We thank the legislature for standing with early childhood educators and look forward to the governor signing this into law."

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