

Home care providers to call out McKee Administration for cutting care hours to pay for state minimum wage increase and refusing to bargain new contract

WHAT: Rhode Island home care providers to join the People's State of the State address

WHO: Consumer-directed home care providers will join faith leaders and community organizations calling for a fair budget that supports working families and vulnerable Rhode Island residents

WHERE: State House Rotunda

WHEN: Tuesday, January 13, 6:00PM

"This is not a raise - it leaves us with less income overall while reducing care for someone who needs more, not less." - Ronjena Henderson

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PROVIDENCE, R.I. -- On January 1, 2026, Rhode Island increased its state minimum wage to \$16 per hour, up from \$15 in 2025. But for hundreds of consumer-directed home healthcare providers across the state, this wage increase comes at the expense of reduced care hours for the vulnerable individuals they care for. With little to no notice, home care workers are seeing the amount of approved care hours slashed in tandem with the wage increase, which in most instances, equals less income overall. Before Governor McKee begins his State of the State address this Tuesday, January 13, home care workers will gather at the State House to call on his Administration to fulfill its promise to raise incomes and improve healthcare outcomes for every Rhode Islander by not balancing the budget on their backs. At the same time, they are demanding EOHHS resume bargaining a new contract after a five month hiatus with home care providers who recently joined SEIU 1199NE.

"I was told my hourly wage would increase from \$15 to \$16, but at the same time the state cut my mother's care by five hours a week. My mother has congestive heart failure and ovarian cancer and needs almost constant care. This is not a raise - it leaves us with less income overall while reducing care for someone who needs more, not less."

Ronjena Henderson, Home Care Provider

In March, 2025, 1,700 workers voted overwhelmingly to form their union with SEIU 1199NE

in order to improve working conditions and stability for their consumers, marking the largest election of state workers since the 1980s. Since then, workers have been trying to negotiate a new contract with The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) but have not had any bargaining sessions with the state since August, 2025, despite repeated requests.

"My 17 year old great granddaughter makes more working at Dunkin Donuts than I do caring for my 95 year old mother for the last 11 years. Governor McKee has repeatedly pledged to support the economic and healthcare needs of all Rhode Islanders. We formed our union to finally make real improvements for both ourselves and our consumers but the state refuses to bargain a contract with us. How is this fair to caregivers or to the thousands of vulnerable people who depend on us every day?"

Roseanna Pacific, Home Care Provider

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ABOUT SEIU 1199NE

District 1199 SEIU New England represents 29,000 health care and service workers in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Southeastern Massachusetts. In Rhode Island, 1199 SEIU NE represents almost 5,000 members. 1199 SEIU NE is affiliated with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) - a union of over 2 million members across the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada. SEIU has been a national leader in pushing the growing Fight for \$15 and a Union movement.