

SEIU 1199NE Applauds Speaker Shekarchi and Senate President Lawson's Budget for Backing Safe Staffing in Nursing Homes

\$5 Million Investment Will Help Improve Care for Residents and Stabilize Frontline Workforce

Providence, RI - SEIU 1199NE is thanking House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi and Senate President Lawson for including a \$5 million funding commitment in the House budget to support the amended Nursing Home Safe Staffing & Quality Care Act, a landmark agreement between labor and the nursing home industry to strengthen resident care and workforce standards. The agreement, forged after months of negotiation between SEIU 1199NE and the Rhode Island Health Care Association (RIHCA), with support from the Raise the Bar on Resident Care Coalition, updates the 2021 nursing home staffing law. It includes a more realistic staffing target, clearer enforcement, fairer penalties and waivers, and public transparency measures—all designed to improve outcomes for residents and address Rhode Island's crisis-level shortage of nursing home staff. Speaker Shekarchi's proposed \$5 million allocation will unlock a \$7 million federal match, generating a total of \$12 million that will go directly to:

Hiring new staff at facilities not yet meeting the safe staffing requirement, or

Raising wages and benefits for existing direct-care workers at facilities already in compliance.

"Safe staffing makes all the difference—for us and for our residents. When we have enough hands on deck, residents get the care they deserve and we go home feeling proud, not defeated. This funding gives us hope that we can finally turn things around and get Rhode Island off that list of the worst-performing states."

Tenah Nimmo-Powell, CNA, AdviniaCare Providence (previously Bannister Center)

Rhode Island currently ranks #2 in the nation for Immediate Jeopardy violations—the most serious kind of federal nursing home deficiency. SEIU 1199NE believes that Speaker Shekarchi and Senate President Lawson's leadership will help reverse that trend and ensure Rhode Island nursing homes have the tools and accountability needed to deliver safe, dignified care. The amended law takes effect January 1, 2026. SEIU 1199NE thanks Speaker Shekarchi, Senate President Lawson and all legislative champions who are standing up for nursing home residents and essential caregivers.

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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.