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Homecare & Healthcare Workers of 1199SEIU Celebrate Historic Budget Agreement that Puts NY on Path to \$15 Minimum Wage

***Agreement means fewer hardworking homecare workers, nurse assistants and other caregivers will
have to rely on food stamps to feed their families***

Caregivers praise Gov. Cuomo who championed raising the minimum wage

New York, NY- The homecare and healthcare workers of 1199SEIU, the healthcare union that has been helping to lead the Fight For \$15, are celebrating the historic budget agreement that has put New York State on the path to a \$15 minimum wage. Millions of hardworking New Yorkers will be lifted up by the \$15 minimum wage, including caregivers throughout the state's hospitals, nursing homes, homecare programs, clinics and pharmacies. There are over 300,000 homecare workers in New York State who make around \$10 an hour, and 56% are forced to rely on public assistance to survive, including 30% who are on food stamps. Over 200 economists, including seven Nobel Prize winners, support raising the minimum wage because it will boost the economy for everybody.

“The \$15 minimum wage means I’ll have a little room to breathe and provide for my family,” said Lisa Johnson, a 45 year-old homecare worker from Queens. “I’m trying to raise four kids on \$10 an hour, so sometimes I have to work seven day weeks and occasionally 22 hour days. Even though I do important work caring for seniors, my kids are on Medicaid and occasionally I’m forced to rely on food stamps to feed them. I’ve been fighting hard for \$15, because all working people should have dignity and a living wage.”

“This budget agreement puts our entire state on the path to a \$15 minimum wage, which will lift up millions of hardworking New Yorkers, including healthcare workers, childcare workers and security guards,” said George Gresham, President of 1199SEIU and Chair of the Mario Cuomo Campaign for Economic Justice. “The majority of those who will benefit are adults working full-time, many of whom support families. Governor Cuomo has been a national leader in the fight against income inequality and a champion of working people, declaring often that ‘We are all connected to each other.’ His tremendous leadership will ensure that all New Yorkers can thrive. We also applaud the bold commitment of Assembly Speaker Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Flanagan, who listened to the voices of working people from across the state. The Mario Cuomo Campaign for Economic Justice was proud to work alongside coalition partners in labor and communities throughout the state to make this day a reality. With this agreement, New York is taking an historic step toward fulfilling the promise of the American Dream that if you work hard, you can build a better future for you and your family. It is also very good news for our state’s economy, which will benefit from the increased spending power of working people who will be better able to shop in local stores, pay the rent and provide for their families. This was a broad collective effort, sparked by the national Fight For \$15 movement, and carried forward by thousands of community organizations, faith leaders, union members, and elected officials. What happens in New York does not stay in New York, and so through all of our combined efforts, our state is leading the way toward a more just future where hard work is rewarded with fair pay.”

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The mission of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East is to advocate for quality healthcare and good jobs for all. With over 250,000 healthcare workers in NY State, and over 400,000 total members throughout the East Coast, they are the nation’s largest and fastest-growing healthcare union.