



Alex Moore, Political Director

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April 23, 2024

Subject: Support for H8153 - Enhancing Resident Rights in Assisted Living Facilities

Dear Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services,

On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, representing over 5,000 healthcare and service workers in Rhode Island, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill H8153. This bill seeks to ensure that residents of assisted living facilities are afforded the same rights to organize family councils as those granted to residents in nursing homes, recognizing the nuanced differences but similar needs between these two types of care settings.

Currently, under R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-17.5-30, residents of nursing homes have the right to have family councils. These councils play a critical role in advocating for the residents' collective interests and addressing issues affecting their care and well-being. However, this vital right is not extended to residents of assisted living facilities, who often face similar challenges and vulnerabilities, especially the significant number who are living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. This oversight is particularly concerning given the high proportion of assisted living residents who are unable to advocate effectively for themselves due to cognitive impairments.

Bill H8153 aims to remedy this by granting assisted living residents the right to organize their own family councils. This legislation also thoughtfully includes protections to ensure that participation in such councils is based on the explicit consent of the residents, with additional provisions tailored for those in dementia special care units.

This extension of rights is not only a matter of fairness but also a crucial step towards improving the quality of care and enhancing the advocacy mechanisms available to all our community's elders. By supporting the formation and operation of family councils in assisted living facilities,

H8153 will empower families and representatives to more effectively partner with facility staff and administration in ensuring that residents receive the respectful, quality care they deserve.

We urge the committee to pass H8153 to protect and enhance the rights of this vulnerable population, aligning the rights of assisted living facility residents with those of nursing home residents. Such measures are fundamental not only to the well-being of residents but also to the integrity and effectiveness of our state's elder care system.

Thank you for considering this significant legislation.

Sincerely,

Alex Moore