



March 5, 2026

**Written Testimony of SEIU 1199NE  
In Support of H-7440, H-7962, and H-7968**

Dear Chair Corvese and Honorable Members of the House Labor Committee,

SEIU 1199NE respectfully submits this testimony in **support of H-7440, H-7962, and H-7968.**

SEIU 1199NE represents approximately **7,500 essential healthcare, home care, and childcare workers across Rhode Island**, including hospital workers, nursing home workers, home care workers, and workers in community health centers who care for tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders every year.

For many of our members, these bills are not abstract policy discussions. They reflect real situations workers in our state have faced.

One example involves the recent labor dispute at Butler Hospital. During that dispute, workers were subjected to an **unfair labor practice lockout that lasted more than three months**, making it the **longest hospital strike in Rhode Island history**. Many of those workers had dedicated years of their lives to caring for Rhode Islanders experiencing serious mental health challenges. Yet during that dispute, they were locked out of their workplace while continuing to fight for fair treatment and safe conditions.

Because Rhode Island law does not currently provide clear access to unemployment insurance in these situations, workers were forced to navigate a complicated process before they could qualify for benefits. **Many workers had to wait more than a month before receiving unemployment insurance**, creating an incredible amount of stress for families who had suddenly lost their income.

That situation was made even worse because the employer also **cut off workers' health insurance during the dispute**. Workers who had spent their careers caring for patients suddenly

found themselves worrying about how to pay their bills and whether their families would have health coverage.

Situations like that demonstrate why workers should be able to access unemployment insurance during a labor dispute when they are locked out or otherwise prevented from working. Workers should not be pushed into financial crisis simply because they are standing up for fairness at work.

Many of our members also experience **unpredictable or reduced hours** in their jobs. Hospital workers, nursing home workers, and home care workers can see their schedules change based on patient census, scheduling decisions, or other factors outside of their control. When that happens, workers should be able to rely on unemployment insurance rules that help them maintain financial stability while continuing to work and care for patients.

Family caregiving is another reality that affects many of the workers we represent. Many of our members come from multigenerational families where caregiving responsibilities often extend beyond a traditional definition of “immediate family.” Workers may be caring for grandparents who helped raise them, siblings with serious health conditions, or other close relatives who rely on them for support.

When a loved one experiences a serious illness, injury, or health crisis, workers should not be forced to choose between caring for that person and keeping their job or paying their bills. Expanding the definition of family under Temporary Caregiver Insurance recognizes the reality of how families actually function and ensures that workers can take time to care for the people who depend on them without facing financial devastation.

Rhode Island has long been a leader in policies that support working families. These bills continue that tradition by strengthening economic security for workers who provide essential services in our communities.

For these reasons, SEIU 1199NE respectfully urges the committee to **support and pass H-7440, H-7962, and H-7968.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alex Moore

Political Director

SEIU 1199NE

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