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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

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**\*\*\* Press Conference Wednesday February 23<sup>rd</sup> at Noon \*\*\***  
**Nursing Home Caregivers Lead Song & Prayer Vigil for  
Elderly Floridians**

***Coalition Rallies Against Legislation That Would Make Florida Unsafe for  
Seniors***

**TALLAHASSEE**---Members of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East and other elder care advocates will lead a song and prayer vigil for Florida seniors at the State Capitol on February 23 while rallying against legislation that would make unsafe cuts to bedside care in nursing homes.

More than 40 caregivers from 1199SEIU will be joined by AARP representatives, clergy, family members of seniors in nursing homes and elected state officials such as **Representative Carlos Guillermo Smith (D- Orlando)** and **Senator Audrey Gibson (D- Jacksonville)** who have championed the cause of better care for elderly patients and healthcare workers in Florida.

This coalition opposes efforts by the multi-billion-dollar nursing home industry -- in particular House Bill 1239 and Senate Bill 804 -- that would make a 20% cut to the required daily bedside hours (from 2.5 to 2.0) a patient must receive from a Certified Nursing Assistant. The bills would make "Florida unsafe for seniors" and "take the 'nursing' out of nursing homes," according to the elder care advocates.

"Nursing homes are largely owned by private equity firms that have one prime directive, to make as much money as possible," said Roxey Nelson, VP of 1199SEIU. "It's outrageous they're allowed to do this with billions of our own tax dollars and at the expense of our most vulnerable elderly patients and low-wage workers." Approximately 70 percent of annual Florida nursing home revenue comes from Medicaid, Medicare and other public funding, while staff such as CNAs earn an average of \$12 per hour, according to 1199SEIU research.

"For the past 20 years the majority in Tallahassee has allowed the industry to cut standards, and the current bills are some of the most drastic and dangerous," Nelson said. "We're

rallying as a coalition of guardians for quality care and the well-being of Florida seniors, and against any legislation that puts them at risk.”

**Who:** Essential nursing home caregivers, senior care advocates, clergy, elected officials including **Representative Smith**

**What:** Song & prayer vigil, news conference on nursing home care for Florida seniors

**Where:** Capitol Rotunda 4th Floor, 400 S. Monroe St, Tallahassee

**When:** 12 to 12:45 p.m., Wednesday, February 23

**Streaming:** The event can be viewed at [1199 SEIU Florida | Facebook](#)

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1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East is the largest union of healthcare workers in Florida, representing more than 24,000 active and retired caregivers across the state. Members of 1199SEIU serve in about 80 nursing homes and 30 hospitals in Florida.