Open letter of support to New York State Nurses Association members from the Northeast Nurses Association

As 13,000 NYSNA members prepare to strike to protect their coworkers and their patients, the Northeast Nurses Association, representing over 38,000 nurses and other healthcare workers through our member affiliates, offers our support and admiration in this critical moment in the history of nursing and labor in New York.

We saw in the recent ballot fight in Massachusetts that corporate healthcare executives are all too willing to waste precious patient-care dollars on fighting their own nurses, to the detriment of safe patient care. Though we didn’t achieve staffing on the ballot in 2018, one of the best things to come out of that campaign was seeing support pour out from all over the country – including many NYSNA nurses who came up to knock doors and join us in the fight.

It’s no secret for any of us who work as frontline providers that hospitals are dangerously understaffed. Short staffing is the driving reason why nearly 4,000 Pennsylvania and Massachusetts nurses and healthcare workers have voted to unionize over the last three years. Two months ago, over 1,200 of these nurses in Philadelphia were able to negotiate safe patient care standards in their collective bargaining agreements, but there is still more work to be done, here and everywhere.

In our most recent organizing campaign at St. Luke’s Hospital in New Bedford, MA, nurses were cheered and inspired when they saw the 2,200 nurses at Albany Medical Center accomplish what they were hoping to achieve. There is a reason nurses are forming unions in New York, in Pennsylvania, in Massachusetts, and in so many other states. There is a reason nurses and healthcare workers in all these states are striking, as we recently saw at Delaware County Memorial Hospital and Wilkes-Barre General in Pennsylvania, at Berkshire Medical Center and Baystate Franklin and Tufts in Massachusetts, at Rhode Island Hospital, and as 13,000 NYSNA nurses are prepared to do. Our healthcare system is deeply broken. Unsafe staffing levels is a pressing emergency. In times like these, nurses must take things into their own hands, with the power they have as vital healthcare workers integral to all hospital operations.

Your resounding 98% strike vote is a critical step in protecting New York patients and nurses, and we hope it shines a public light on the issue of unsafe staffing like never before. Regardless of different specialties, different states, different unions, we have got to STICK TOGETHER TO WIN TOGETHER. If the nurses at Mt. Sinai, Presbyterian and Montefiore are ready to strike for
safe patient care then nurses and allied professionals from the Northeast Nurses Association will be there on the picket lines!

We are with you 100% of the way, keep up the good fight!

In solidarity,
Northeast Nurses Association