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**THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS**
of New York State

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:
A.1718/GOTTFRIED

TO: New York State Assembly Health Committee
DATE: MAY 12, 2009

Subject: *An act to amend the public health law, in relation nursing home staffing levels.*

The League of Women Voters of New York State supports the above reference legislation that would establish staffing standards for direct nursing care for nursing homes, in consultation with an advisory council. This legislation would require the health department to establish minimum staffing levels for certified nurses aids, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses in consultation with an advisory council. The bill would require nursing homes to disclose their staffing levels to the public and to the Health Department and it would create an advisory council on nursing home staffing who would make recommendations to the governor, legislature and commissioner of health on nursing home staffing.

The League has long advocated for quality health care for all New Yorkers. Today, patients frequently need family advocates to ensure a basic level of care that time and again places tremendous strains on families. Inadequate staffing levels are reflected in call bell response times that commonly run a fifteen to twenty-minute minimum, and at times pushes thirty minutes, combined with a stressed and burned out nursing staff often translates to a poor quality of treatment and attention for nursing home residents. Increased adverse patient care incidents, medication errors and patient injuries have a direct correlation to insufficient staffing levels. This legislation would be a significant remedy to this problem.

For the above reasons, the New York State League of Women Voters strongly urges your support for A.1718.