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1199 SEIU AND 32BJ SEIU ENDORSE GUSTAVO RIVERA FOR STATE SENATE

*– New York’s Largest Healthcare and Private Sector Unions Unite
for Strong Leadership in Albany –*

New York, NY—1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, the largest healthcare union in the country, and 32BJ SEIU, the largest private-sector union in New York, today announced their joint endorsement of Gustavo Rivera for State Senate in New York’s 33rd Senatorial District. With high membership density in the 33rd, both 1199 and 32BJ are making this race top priority for the primary and general elections. Both unions will soon be starting with direct mail, live phone calls and ground troops to mobilize union members on Rivera’s behalf.

“Albany needs leaders who put the interests of working New Yorkers ahead of politics and power plays,” said 32BJ President Mike Fishman. “As someone who pledges to uphold the high standards we should expect from our public servants, we are proud to support Gustavo Rivera.”

1199 and 32BJ have successfully worked together to elect candidates that represent working families. In 2009, the two unions worked to elect four progressive insurgents to the City Council - Fernando Cabrera, whose Council District is in the 33rd Senate District, Jumaane Williams, Danny Dromm and Debi Rose. The unions are known for their strength in mobilizing members to support endorsed candidates, and both played a key role in electing Comptroller John Liu and Public Advocate Bill De Blasio to citywide office. During the 2008 state elections, both unions sent hundreds of member volunteers to speak with voters about the union’s endorsed candidates.

“The 375,000 members of 1199 SEIU are incredibly proud to endorse Gustavo Rivera for state Senate. Throughout his career, Gustavo has stood for integrity and the kind of progressive values that our members share,” said George Gresham, President of 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. “This district deserves honest leadership, and we believe Gustavo Rivera will be a true voice for reform rather than an obstacle for change. Gustavo is a friend and a champion of working families; we know he will serve the community with honor and distinction. Our members are excited and ready to get Gustavo to Albany.”

For more than a decade, Gustavo has worked at every level of politics successfully helping elect the most respected progressive political leaders in City Hall, the State Capitol and the White House - all of whom prioritize the needs of working families and issues important to organized labor. Rivera himself is a former member of PSC-CUNY while as an adjunct professor at Hunter College, and is a current member of the Adjunct Faculty Union at Pace University.

“I am honored and humbled to receive this joint endorsement. 1199 and 32BJ are at the forefront of the fight for better opportunities for working families. As a State Senator, I promise to work for quality healthcare, good-paying jobs, rights for tenants, and true reform in Albany,” said Rivera. “As a union member myself, I have dedicated my career to helping the nurses, caregivers, building service workers and janitors receive living wage jobs, quality healthcare and the right to unionize. For nearly a decade, I have worked closely with 1199 and 32BJ to forge a more progressive, union friendly majority in the New York State Senate and I have stood with these hardworking men and women fighting for change across the country. I am proud to stand with these members again today and I look forward to continuing to fight for them in Albany.”

In 2008, SEIU recruited Rivera to manage its field operations on behalf of Barack Obama in several crucial primary states. He traveled the country for SEIU and then-Senator Obama, working in Indiana, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Puerto Rico. After securing the Democratic nomination, Mr. Obama named Rivera his Constituency Director in the critical swing state of Florida.

With 375,000 members in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maryland, Florida and Washington D.C., 1199 SEIU is the largest and fastest growing healthcare union in the country. Our mission is to achieve affordable, high quality healthcare for all.

With more than 120,000 members in seven states and Washington, DC, including 70,000 in New York, 32BJ is the largest property services union in the country and the largest private-sector union in New York.

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