



*The National Voice for Direct-Care RNs*

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February 23, 2021

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the 170,000 registered nurses represented by National Nurses United, we write to urge you to cosponsor the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act, introduced by Representative Joe Courtney.

Across the country, registered nurses and other health care workers are put at risk every day when providing quality care for patients in need. Over the course of the past year, the dangerous working conditions in our nation's hospitals and health care facilities have been exposed due the Covid-19 pandemic. But these hazardous working conditions pre-date Covid-19.

The danger of violence in the workplace has become its own epidemic in our nation's health care and social service workplaces. In 2019, nurses reported more than three times the rate of injuries due to workplace violence than workers overall. Nurses report being punched, kicked, bitten, beaten, and threatened with violence as they provide care to others—and far too many have experienced stabbings and shootings.

Violence on the job has increased for nurses during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to a recent survey conducted by National Nurses United, twenty percent of nurses report facing increased workplace violence on the job over the course of the pandemic, which they attribute to decreasing staffing levels, changes in the patient population, and visitor restrictions.

There are practical steps that healthcare and social service employers can take to fulfill their obligations to protect their employees from these serious occupational hazards. We know that violence can be prevented through the development and implementation of plans that are tailored to specific patient care units and facilities. These plans must assess and address the range of risks for violence— from the sufficiency of staffing and security systems to environmental and patient-specific risk factors.

The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act mandates that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration promulgate a workplace violence prevention standard that would require healthcare and social service employers to develop and enforce plans to protect their employees from violence on the job. To ensure that workplace violence prevention plans are effective, workers (including nurses, other direct care employees, and security personnel) must be involved throughout all stages of plan development, implementation, and review, which go hand-in-hand with the standard's comprehensive training requirements. The enforceable occupational health and safety standard established in this legislation is necessary to create and maintain protections against workplace

violence that our members, other workers in healthcare and social settings, and, importantly, our patients deserve.

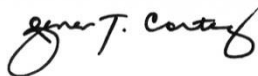
Last Congress, the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act was passed in the House of Representatives with bipartisan support. As nurses and other health care and social service workers continue to put their lives at risk to do their jobs, it is imperative that Congress pass this legislation and ensure it is signed into law.

If you have any questions about this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact our Lead Legislative Advocate, Amirah Sequeira, at 240-447-0034. To cosponsor the bill, please reach out to [Maria.Costigan@mail.house.gov](mailto:Maria.Costigan@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



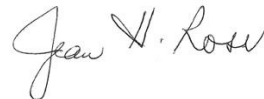
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