

June 14, 2022

The Honorable Madeleine Dean
U.S. House of Representatives
120 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Larry Bucshon, M.D.
U.S. House of Representatives
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Dean and Bucshon:

The American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) strongly supports the *Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act of 2022*, which would make it a federal crime to assault or intimidate a hospital employee. Thank you for your leadership in offering health care workers the same protections as aircraft and airport workers.

As the professional organization of the more than 11,000 nurse leaders who manage and provide patient care across the health care continuum, AONL is the voice of nursing leadership and an affiliate of the American Hospital Association.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated an increasing trend in violent incidents in the health care sector from 2011 to 2018, with almost three quarters of all nonfatal injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work occurring among health care workers. Unfortunately, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, incidences of workplace violence against health care workers has skyrocketed. Despite the diligent efforts of hospitals and health systems to prevent violence, health care workers remain five times more likely than any other type of worker to experience a physical attack on the job.

Violence in the health care setting has implications far beyond the injuries sustained by our workforce. Our nurse leaders have seen the effect of workplace violence and intimidation on their nursing staff. It is one of the reason nurses site for wanting or planning to leave direct patient care. Workplace violence also makes it more difficult for clinical staff to care for patients. Nurses and physicians cannot provide attentive care when they are afraid for their personal safety, distracted by disruptive patients or family members, or traumatized from prior attacks.

Despite the proliferation of workplace violence and its deleterious effects on our health care system, we do not have a federal law that protects health care workers from assault or intimidation. In contrast, vigorous enforcement of federal laws criminalizing assault and intimidation against aircraft and airport workers has helped create a safer travel environment, deterring violent behavior and ensuring that offenders face severe consequences for their actions.

AONL looks forward to supporting your efforts in passing this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Robyn Begley
Chief Executive Officer, AONL
Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer, AHA