

May 2, 2025

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
United State Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Angus King
United State Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Hyde-Smith and King:

On behalf of our more than 12,000 member nurse leaders who lead the delivery and provision of patient care across the health care continuum, the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) is pleased to support the *Save Healthcare Workers Act*, which would make it a federal crime to assault a hospital worker on hospital grounds. We appreciate your leadership extending health care workers the same protections as aircraft and airport workers.

Over the past five years, incidents of violence against health care workers have skyrocketed, as incivility and violent acts in our society spill into hospitals. Protecting health care workers and addressing workplace violence is a top priority for health care leaders. Hospitals and health systems have bolstered security measures, training programs and policies to ensure the safety of health care workers and patients. Despite these efforts, health care and social service workers are five times more likely than any other type of worker to be physically attacked on the job, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. No one should have to fear for their safety while at work, especially when their job is to care for patients.

Violence in the health care setting has implications far beyond the injuries sustained by this workforce. Nurse leaders see the effect of workplace violence and intimidation on their nursing staff. Nurses cite workplace violence as a factor for their decision to leave patient care. Workplace violence creates a difficult environment for nurses 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 effect on our health care system, we do not have a federal law that protects health care workers from assault. In contrast, aircraft and airport workers benefit from federal protections that have helped create a safer travel environment. The awareness and enforcement of these federal laws, which criminalize assault and intimidation, have deterred violent behavior and ensured offenders face severe consequences for their actions.

The Save Healthcare Workers Act is critical to protecting the safety of hospital workers. AONL looks forward to supporting your efforts in passing this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Claire M. Zangerle
Chief Executive Officer, AONL
Senior Vice President, Chief Nurse Executive, AHA