



The National Voice for Direct-Care RNs

WASHINGTON DC
8455 Colesville Road
Suite 1100
Silver Spring MD 20910
phone: 800-287-5021
fax: 240-235-2019

OAKLAND
155 Grand Avenue
Suite 100
Oakland CA 94612
phone: 800-504-7859
fax: 510-663-1625

July 14, 2022

Dear Senator,

We write today to urge you to cosponsor and pass S. 4182, the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act. Health care and social service workers, the majority of whom are women, face extreme and growing levels of violence on the job every day. This legislation would help provide basic protections and safety standards to working women who spend their lives caring for others.

In 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that health care and social service workers were nearly five times as likely to suffer a serious workplace violence injury than workers in other sectors.¹ Health care workers report being punched, kicked, bitten, beaten, choked, and assaulted on the job - and some have even faced stabbings and shootings, such as the recent tragic mass shooting at a Tulsa, Oklahoma medical campus. Addressing this growing epidemic of workplace violence is crucial to addressing the high rates of health care and social service workers leaving their jobs due to unsafe working conditions.

A 2019 analysis by the U.S. Census Bureau titled “Your Care is in Women’s Hands” found that women account for three-quarters of full-time, year-round health care workers today.² In social service work the number is even higher – recent Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows that over 80% of social workers and social and human service assistants are women.³ Preventing violence in the workplace is at the heart of protecting the health and safety of women workers who, for over two years now, have battled both the physical and mental impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While women – and particularly women of color – continue to be prominent in critical frontline jobs like health care and social service work, our work is undervalued because it often sits under the broader category of care work, jobs that have been historically devalued simply because women perform them. Unfortunately, with the devaluing of our work comes the devaluing of our lives. It is past time for legislation that would help ensure that not one more health care or social service worker faces violence – or dies -- while doing her job.

The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act, introduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin, would mandate that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) create a federal standard requiring health care and social service employers to develop and implement a comprehensive workplace violence prevention plan. This bill is a companion to H.R. 1195, which passed the House of Representatives in a strong bipartisan vote in April 2021.

We need permanent workplace protections for all workers who continue to put their lives at risk by caring for others. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Hannah Bauman, Legislative

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Occupational Outlook Handbook, Social Workers. Last updated April 18, 2022. www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm.

² Jennifer Cheesman Day and Cheridan Christnacht, “Your Health Care Is in Women’s Hands.” United States Census Bureau, August 14, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/08/your-health-care-in-womens-hands.html>.

³ Ibid.

Advocate at National Nurses United, at hbauman@nationalnursesunited.org. To cosponsor the bill, please reach out to brian_conlan@baldwin.senate.gov. It is high time that we care for the workers who care for us.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Castillo, RN
Executive Director
National Nurses United

Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber, MD, FACP,
FAMWA
President
American Medical Women's Association

Virginia Kase Solomón
CEO
League of Women Voters of the United States

Amy Hinojosa
President and CEO
MANA, A National Latina Organization

Sheila Katz
CEO
National Council of Jewish Women

Janice L. Mathis
Executive Director
National Council of Negro Women

Elise Bryant
President
Coalition of Labor Union Women

Christian F. Nunes
President
National Organization for Women

Elizabeth A. Shuler
President
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

Elizabeth A. Jones
National President
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.

Randi Weingarten
President
American Federation of Teachers

Shaunna Thomas
Co-founder, Executive Director
UltraViolet

Rachel O'Leary Carmona
Executive Director
Women's March