

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces bipartisan legislation to safeguard health care professionals from workplace violence

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Representative Joe Courtney (D-CT-02) introduced bipartisan, bicameral legislation to protect health care and social service employees from workplace violence. The *Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Worker Act* directs Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue a standard requiring health care and social service employers to write and implement a workplace violence prevention plan to prevent and protect their employees from violent incidents.

Health care and social service workers were victims of [76 percent](#) of all nonfatal injuries from workplace violence in 2020. While workplace violence trends were increasing before the pandemic, recent research suggests the problem has worsened considerably, contributing to staffing shortages. Half of nurses surveyed in 2022 reported increased workplace violence, more than double the previous year.

“Our health care and social service workers deserve to work in a safe environment free from violence,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “It is unacceptable that our health care workers are subjected to senseless acts of violence in their workplace, and we must do more to protect them. I am proud to introduce this legislation to give our nurses, doctors, health care support staff, and social service professionals with long-overdue basic protections, helping address our health care workforce shortage and keep our frontline heroes safe.”

“No worker—especially those we rely on for care—should be injured or killed on the job. Unfortunately, this workforce endures more violence than any other workforce in America, and rates are rising as employers struggle to fill vacancies in needed health care sectors. If we want to fill vacancies and retain workers, then we must protect workers on the job,” **said Representative Joe Courtney.** “This legislation would put proven tactics into practice in hospitals and health care settings across the country to prevent violence before it happens. I’m grateful for the bipartisan coalition—backed by the support of the workers directly affected by this violence—who has worked tirelessly to move this legislation forward.”

The *Workplace Violence Prevention in Healthcare and Social Services Act* would ensure that health care and social service workplaces implement proven techniques and are prepared to respond in the tragic event of a violent incident.

In the Senate, this bill is supported by Bob Casey (D-PA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Brian Schatz (D-HI), John Hickenlooper (D-CO), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), John Reed (D-RI), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Patty Murray (D-WA), Peter Welch (D-VT), Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

In the House, this bill is supported by Don Bacon (R-NE-02), Bobby Scott (D-VA-03), Alma Adams (D-NC-12), Jefferson Van Drew (R-NJ-02), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01).

“Health care and social service workers are routinely subjected to threats, assaults, and injury from foreseeable and preventable acts of workplace violence at rates that significantly exceed all other professions,” **Representative Bobby Scott.** “This bill strengthens protections for these critical workers by requiring that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration issue an enforceable standard within 42 months of enactment that ensures employers adopt plans to address preventable acts of workplace violence. I am grateful to Rep. Courtney for his leadership on this bill and his continued commitment to the safety of our health and social service workers.”

“Our health care and social workers deserve to be protected from workplace violence,” **said Representative Don Bacon.** “It is my hope that the Department of Labor will take steps to ensure that these workers are safe to continue their vital work. They have stepped up to care for others, and we must have their backs.”

The *Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act* is supported by the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN), AFGE, AFL-CIO, AFSCME, AFT, American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work, American College of Emergency Physicians, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), American Nephrology Nurses Association (ANNA), American Nurses Association, American Public Health Association, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Emergency Nurses Association, IAM, National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), National Association of Social Workers, National Nurses United, PhilaPOSH, USW, Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN), and the American Psychiatric Association.

“Violence in our hospitals and clinics has reached epidemic levels,” **said NNU President Deborah Burger, RN.** “Nurses have been punched, kicked, bitten, and choked or threatened with extreme violence. Tragically, some nurses have even lost their lives after being attacked on the job. This is why we urgently need legislative action to hold our employers accountable, through federal OSHA, for having a prevention plan in place to stop workplace violence before it occurs. We greatly appreciate Senator Baldwin and Representative Courtney for introducing the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act to help protect us at work so we can do our job of caring for you, your loved ones, and our communities”

A one pager on the legislation is available [here](#).

Additional quotes of support is available [here](#).

Full text of the legislation is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).