

**SB0298 - SUPPORT  
Emergency Bill**

Threat Against Public Health Official or Hospital Staff Member

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

When I started as an emergency nurse in 2007, it was made clear that verbal and physical violence was just “part of the job.” Going home with bruises and emotional trauma has been normalized. As healthcare providers during this especially difficult time, enduring daily abuse is unacceptable, and adding to the mounting burnout and nurses leaving the profession.

More recently I’ve had a few attacks that have affected me mentally and physically. At the very beginning of the pandemic in 2020, a very aggressive violent patient needed to be restrained by multiple staff, for their and our safety. This patient was large, strong and unwaveringly angry. During the attempt to restrain them, I was grabbed and not able to break free. It took multiple people to pry their grip off of my arm. In 15 years I have never been as scared of a patient as I was at that moment. I had bruises and pain for weeks.

While in triage, where people arrive, another patient, began yelling homophobic slurs. We got the patient back to their room, and they turned their aggression on me. For the next 8 hours, I had to endure disrespectful, homophobic verbal abuse from this patient while I had to care for them with compassion and empathy.

The most recent incident left me with bruises on my arms and stomach after a patient began punching and kicking me, while in a locked area. Thankfully security staff was close by or I would have been more hurt. Due to the age and circumstance of the patient, this was a difficult situation all around. After reporting this issue to my charge nurse, management had reached out to see what I needed. I asked to not be put in that area of the emergency department for awhile. A few short weeks later I was assigned to the area I requested not to be. When I brought up the previous incident, I was told that due to staffing shortages I would have to go there anyways.

These are just snap shots of hundreds of verbal and physical assaults I’ve experienced in 15 years. As with all of the incidents, I documented each through the hospital internal complaint system. But it often feels like it goes nowhere, and nothing is ever

implemented to prevent or mitigate the situation. We continue to get treated like punching bags, with no repercussions. Not even a sign indicating aggressive behavior will not be tolerated.

There needs to be an understanding that this behavior will not be tolerated. We need action and accountability for these violent and disrespectful behaviors. We need your help. Please pass State Bill 0298 and help keep your hospital staff safe.

With much appreciation,

Mx. Clare Madrigal, BSN, RN (she/her)