

**SB26 – Labor and Employment – Occupational Safety and Health –
Revisions (Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act)
Appropriations Committee
March 26, 2025**

FAVORABLE

My name is Wendy Smith, and I am a registered nurse with more than 25 years of experience. I am also the President of AFSCME Local 558 where I represent nurses who have dedicated their lives to public health nursing. I am writing in strong support of this vital legislation and asking for your support of this bill.

As a public health nurse, it is our responsibility to go into the homes of our clients. We work directly with first time mothers, assessing the health and environment of our aging population as well as reaching out to school age children to ensure they are receiving necessary services. In doing so, this places our nurses at an increased risk for harm.

As a nurse and a woman, I have personally been placed in positions where I've been sexually harassed by clients. I remember being so frightened when a male client pretended to have some sort of heart ailment, just so I would move closer to him. As I proceeded to take his vitals, he began to tell me how nice I smelled, and that I reminded him of his wife, needless to say the conversation digressed from there. This gentleman was fine, but it dawned on me that my employer had no provisions to protect me. When I shared my concern to leadership, in my opinion nothing was done. No investigation and no recording of the concerns.

My story is not unique.

My nurses tell me daily of the risk they take when entering homes alone. They have been confronted with impaired individuals whom appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, violent individuals especially those homes we go into that may have an open CPS case (Child Protective Services). We are continually placing our safety at risk and complaints to management either lands on deaf ears, or their met with many different possible resolutions, that are inconsistently applied from member to member or throughout my department or other agencies. We need clear, concise and most importantly consistent messaging and this bill does exactly that.

The Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act I wholeheartedly support, this would mandate that employers put in place safety measures that would guide how concerns are being addressed, require complaints to be recorded, and it allows deeply needed oversight of the process.

I urge the committee to issue a favorable report of SB26.