



A Union of Professionals
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**Written Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House Economic Matters Committee
HB 1568 – Labor and Employment – Health Care Facilities –
Workplace Safety (Safe Care Act)
March 10, 2020**

SUPPORT

Chair Davis and members of the committee. On behalf of the 20,000 members of the American Federation of Teachers – Maryland (AFT-Maryland), and as the federation that represents the state employees of AFT Healthcare-Maryland, we ask for a favorable report on HB 1568.

Assaults have increased at state hospitals. Data that tracks these assaults is not accurate due to the fact most employees do not report them because typically nothing is done.

Unfortunately, judges and the courts are not always aware of the mental challenges of the patients in state hospitals. If a staff member is assaulted by a patient, that patient goes to court, but often is sent back to the same building or even same unit as the staff person they attacked.

State employees at these hospitals go to work every day knowing they could be assaulted, but they chose to do this work because they care about and want to help their patients.

Health and Safety Committees in the work places have no teeth to protect healthcare workers. Changes are sometimes made, but in small increments and discussions on safety go nowhere.

This bill will require facility safety plans to specifically address workplace violence; procedures for responding to and investigating assaults; new data maintenance requirements on assaults and other types of workplace violence; and it will require the Maryland Department of Labor to issue workplace violence prevention regulations for state health care facilities and monitor for non-compliance.

It is for these reasons we ask for a favorable report on HB 1568. Thank you.

Marietta English
President