



Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 298

Title: Criminal Law- Threat Against Public Health Official or Hospital Staff Member

Hearing Date: February 8, 2022

Position: Favorable with Amendments

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *Senate Bill 298 – Criminal Law- Threat Against Public Health Official or Hospital Staff Member*. The bill prohibits threatening a public health official or hospital staff and imposes criminal liability and fines if a person is found guilty of making or sending a threat to a public health official or hospital staff.

Addressing workplace violence is one of MNA’s top priorities. Maryland nurses from all settings, including hospitals, private care, and nursing homes, have felt the impacts of workplace violence on their professional and personal lives. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 21% of nurses have reported physical harm, and this number is low because workplace violence is underreported with 30-50% of events never being reported.¹ MNA’s members have reported to us that the level of threats and harassment have increased during the pandemic.

While nurses have been on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic, their scope of work is not limited to only hospital settings. Nurses report that threats occur across all health care settings including home visiting, residential settings, and even in private practices Therefore, we ask for an amendment:

On page 1 in line 18 and on page 2 in line 7, strike “HOSPITAL” and replace with “HEALTH CARE”

On page 1 in line 19, replace “HOSPITAL” with “LICENSED HEALTH CARE FACILITY, LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROGRAM, OR PRACTICE OF A LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROVIDER”

¹ OSHA 3826. Workplace Violence in Healthcare. Understanding the Challenge. (2015).<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3826.pdf>

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Suhani Chitalia at schitalia@policypartners.net.