

# ***The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act***

**Introduced by Senator Baldwin**

**Ranking Member of the Senate Employment and Workplace Safety Subcommittee**

The *Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act*, directs the 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 employees from violent incidents.

Incidents of violence against health care and social service workers is on the rise. A [2016 GAO study](#) reported that rates of violence against health care workers are up to 12 times higher than rates for the overall workforce, and 70% of nonfatal workplace assaults in 2016 occurred in the health care and social assistance sectors. Recently released data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found a [sharp increase in serious injuries](#) as a result of workplace violence among health care workers last year. Front line employees in these settings interact with a range of patients, clients, and their families, often with little training or direction for how to prevent or handle interactions that become violent. The *Workplace Violence Prevention in Health Care and Social Services Act* would ensure that health care and social service workplaces adopt proven prevention techniques and are prepared to respond in the tragic event of a violent incident.

In 2013, House and Senate members requested that the Government Accountability Office study the trends in healthcare workplace violence and identify options for OSHA to curtail it, and in 2015 he and other members asked OSHA to develop a workplace safety standard to protect health care workers from this rising violence. In recent years, OSHA agreed to undergo rulemaking on health care workplace violence, but action has stalled under the Trump Administration. In the absence of voluntary action from OSHA, this legislation is necessary to ensure that nurses, doctors, medical assistants, emergency personnel, and social service workers are not subjected to needless preventable acts of violence on the job.

The *Workplace Violence Prevention in Health Care and Social Services Act* is endorsed by American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, AFSCME, American Federation of Government Employees, International Association of Fire Fighters, National Nurses United, United Steelworkers, and Public Citizen.

The *Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act* received support from a host of health care and social service professionals, as well as unions representing workers in these sectors, including the American Federation of Teachers, National Nurses United, National Association of Social Workers, American Nurses Association, Emergency Nurses Association, AFL-CIO, AFSCME Affiliate Connecticut Health Care Associates, Nurse Alliance of SEIU Healthcare, United Steel Workers International, and Public Citizen.