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**Senate Judiciary Committee
Senator Larson, Chairman
Testimony in Support of HB 1341
Tuesday, March 11, 2025**

Dear Chairman Larson, Vice Chairman Paulson and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Sherri Miller, and I have been a registered nurse in North Dakota for 26 years. I am also the Executive Director of the North Dakota Nurses Association (NDNA). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in **support of HB 1341**.

The NDNA is the only professional organization that represents all nurses in North Dakota. Our mission is to advance the nursing profession by promoting the professional development of nurses, fostering high standards of nursing practice, ensuring the safety and well-being of nurses in the workplace, and advocating for healthcare issues that affect both nurses and the public. We believe that NDNA is the leading voice for nurses in our state.

Healthcare workers, including nurses, are facing an alarming reality: they experience workplace violence nearly four times more frequently than workers in any other industry. This includes physical assaults like punching, slapping, scratching, choking, kicking, and inappropriate grabbing, occurring across all patient care settings, not just emergency rooms.

To effectively address workplace violence, it is crucial that there be a zero-tolerance mindset toward this issue. We recognize the need for increased awareness and education on workplace violence prevention strategies, as well as the implementation of robust workplace violence prevention policies and procedures. **We also need legislation with stronger penalties for individuals who assault healthcare workers in the hospital.** The hospital setting creates a unique vulnerability for staff like nurses, who cannot abandon patients, even in difficult situations.

NDNA, in partnership with the American Nurses Association (ANA), emphasizes the critical link between safety and quality care. As the ANA position statement highlights, “a safe work environment is fundamental to the physical and psychological well-being of healthcare teams. When staff feel unsafe, patient safety is compromised.” High rates of workplace violence lead to significant turnover among healthcare workers, worsening staffing shortages and negatively affecting patient care. In contrast, robust safety laws indicate a commitment to worker well-being, which can help attract and retain skilled professionals.

We urge you to support HB 1341, a crucial step towards protecting our healthcare workforce. **Please vote yes on HB 1341.**

Thank you.

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