

**Senate Judiciary Committee
Senator Diane Larson, Chair
March 21, 2023
HB 1121**

Good morning, Chair Larson and members of the committee. My name is Alexandra Martinez. I am a registered nurse and I work in Sanford Fargo Medical Center's intensive care unit (ICU). Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1121.

Let me start by telling you that nursing has always been my dream. I wasn't able to attend nursing school until I was 27. I was excited to work at Sanford Medical Center when I graduated. I joined the neuro/surgical nursing unit for one year and then advanced to the ICU eleven months ago. I love my job. I enjoy taking care of our patients and I am grateful to be part of an amazing team of caregivers.

My world changed when a patient I was helping chose to kick me in the head. I was part of a team removing this patient's breathing tube. He was awake and we had explained the procedure to him. As we finished the process, he grabbed my co-worker and managed to kick me in the head. I fell to the ground and blacked out.

When I woke up, I was outside the room. That week, I started to feel pain in my head, wrist, ribs, and hip. A neuro exam confirmed I had a concussion and because I am pregnant I could not have an x-ray.

The side effects from the concussion and pain are still ongoing and the fear this will happen again is still there. I'm not able to do the physical activities I used to do and I am not myself. I am scared to go back and I cannot help but question if I should leave healthcare and return to my desk job where it is safer.

The majority of our patients are wonderful people who appreciate the support caregivers provide, but the number of patients who aim to hurt us seems to be increasing.

When I was asked to share my story with you, I asked if there was a chance the increased penalty could apply to the man that kicked me. I understand that cannot happen, but I am grateful for the opportunity to help change the law for other healthcare workers going forward.

Thank you for your consideration. On behalf of healthcare workers in our state who take care of patients and their families when they need us most, I am asking you to vote yes on HB 1211.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Martinez

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