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Testimony in Support of House Bill 1341

House Judiciary Committee

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Dear Chairman Klemin and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Good morning. My name is Sherri Miller, and I have been a registered nurse in North Dakota for almost 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.

U.S. healthcare workers experience workplace violence at a rate nearly four times higher than that of other industries. They face threats such as being punched, slapped, scratched, choked, kicked, and inappropriately grabbed. This violence can occur in all patient care settings, not just in the emergency room.

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 NDNA collaborates with the American Nurses Association (ANA) to leverage their resources and expertise in tackling workplace violence. **The ANA Position Statement emphasizes that “a safe work environment promotes physical and psychological well-being. If members of the healthcare team do not feel safe, the work environment becomes vulnerable, compromising everyone’s safety.”**

High rates of workplace violence can lead to high turnover among healthcare workers, creating staffing shortages and impacting patient care. **Strong safety laws can help attract and retain top talent by demonstrating a commitment to worker well-being.**

We respectfully request that you **please vote yes on HB 1341**.

Thank you,

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