



2021 SB 2268
Senate Judiciary Committee
Senator Diane Larson, Chairman
January 27, 2021

Good morning Chairman Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I am Melissa Hauer, General Counsel of the North Dakota Hospital Association (NDHA). I ask that you give 2021 Senate Bill 2268 a **Do Pass** recommendation.

NDHA supports the protection of all health care workers from violence in the workplace. Health care workers experience workplace violence at a rate far higher than the national average. The health care industry is statistically the most violent non-law-enforcement industry in the United States. For example, in mental health settings, 70 percent of employees are physically assaulted every year, 82 percent of emergency department nurses reported being physically assaulted last year and 100 percent reporting being verbally assaulted, and 40 percent of physicians practicing in a psychiatric setting report being physically assaulted at work.

Health care workers who leave the industry because of assaults and threats of violence contribute to health care worker shortages. Retention of workers in the health care field can be increased by supporting specific protection for any health care workers assaulted on the job. Enhanced criminal penalties against those who commit assault in a health care setting send a strong message that such violence will not be tolerated.

All people who work in a health care setting, whether it is a nurse in a hospital, a maintenance technician in a clinic, or a food service worker in a nursing home, as well as those who work in an emergency department setting, deserve such protection. These laws serve as another

deterrent to abusive, violent behavior toward people working in the health care setting and let them know that they are valued and will be protected.

This bill is a way to show our health care workers their safety matters. NDHA supports enhanced criminal penalties against those who commit assault against anyone who works in a health care setting and we appreciate your efforts to send a strong message that violence in this setting will not be tolerated.

We support this bill and ask that you give it a **Do Pass** recommendation. I would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Hauer, General Counsel/VP
North Dakota Hospital Association