



Testimony in Support of House Bill 452

Ohio Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

December 4, 2024

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chairman Wilson, Ranking Minority Member Craig, and members of the Senate Veterans & Public Safety Committee:

My name is Jan Lanier. I am a registered nurse (RN) with over 40 years of experience in a variety of practice settings and I currently chair the ANA-Ohio Public Policy Committee. I am writing today to express support for HB 452 on behalf of ANA-Ohio, a relatively new and growing professional organization for all RNs in the State of Ohio. Our members work in acute care, long-term care, home care, public health, nursing education and more.

This bill addresses an issue nurses and other health care providers have been facing for years—workplace violence. In 2018, 73% of all nonfatal workplace violence-related injuries involved healthcare workers. Those numbers are likely higher because many of the incidents go unreported. (In thirty-nine percent of incidents of workplace violence involving patients and families, 19% were unreported according to a year-long University of Michigan study). Workplace violence became even more commonplace during the COVID-19 pandemic and has been cited as the leading cause of job dissatisfaction among healthcare providers today. Working in an environment where workplace violence is often seen as “just part of the job”, coupled with other stressors that permeate the health care system, it should not be surprising that staff shortages are once again on the rise. It is not okay for nurses and other providers to deal with verbal abuse, violent physical assault, battery, stalking, harassment and other threats to their personal safety while doing their jobs and caring for the patients they serve.¹

Like most legislation, HB 452 is not perfect. It is, however, a welcomed step that should help mitigate workplace violence regardless of the practice setting in which it occurs. Obviously, nurses working in acute care, particularly those in behavioral health or emergency departments are at greater risk, but no nurse is risk-free. During my own clinical practice, the most endangered I felt was when I worked in home health. Some of those situations haunt me even today. While HB 452 does not specifically address home healthcare, one provision that broadens the ultimate impact of the bill is the language

directing the Department of Higher Education to survey Ohio's colleges and universities that provide education to healthcare providers to evaluate current education and training included in their curricula on the prevention of workplace violence. This could and should lead to new awareness early in a nurses' career, of strategies for dealing with aggressive behavior regardless of where the behavior occurs. Violence in the workplace is not something to hide, and making reporting of a violent encounter more routine would help erase some of the stigma and finger-pointing that often accompanies such violence.

ANA-Ohio appreciates the work that has been done thus far and the changes made to the substitute bill that is now before this committee. It is important not to delay passage of this important legislation. Moving forward expeditiously would effectively send a message to thousands of health care providers, nurses and others, that indeed workplace violence is NOT to be tolerated, that it is NOT "just part of the job". On behalf of ANA-Ohio, we respectfully request the support and passage of HB 452.

Thank you for your consideration of the points ANA-Ohio has raised. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Notes:

1. Jones, C. PhD, RN, FAAN C., Sousane, Z. BS, et. al. (10/31/23) *Addressing workplace violence and creating a safer workplace*. PS Net, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Rockfield, MD. Retrieved 11/29/24 from <https://psnet.ahrq.gov/perspective/addressing-workplace-violence-and-creating-safer-workplace>

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