

Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act

Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Marco Rubio (R-FL)

Cosponsors: Angus King (I-ME)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of health workers who reported harassment at work more than doubled from 2018 to 2022, leading to higher rates of burnout and intention to find another job.¹ Given that threats and violence in hospitals have been on the rise, the *SAVE Act* would provide the same protection to hospital staff that we provide flight attendants and airport workers by making it a federal offense to threaten hospital workers.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the rate of injuries from violent attacks against medical professionals grew by 63% from 2011 to 2018, while hospital safety directors say that aggression against staff has escalated since the COVID-19 intensified in 2020.² In Q2 of 2022, more than two nursing personnel were assaulted every hour, equating to 57 assaults per day, 1,739 assaults per month and 5,217 assaults per quarter.³ With the increase in violence against hospital workers and healthcare worker burnout, it is clear that we need to protect healthcare workers and make their safety a priority.

Although nearly 40 states have passed laws to increase penalties for violence against health care workers, there is currently no federal law that protects hospital employees from assault or intimidation. The *SAVE Act* would mirror protections for aircraft and airport workers and would allow extra tools for prosecutors to charge individuals threatening hospitals and their workers. By creating stronger penalties for those who assault or harass hospital workers, this legislation would deter and prevent violence against hospital employees. Additionally, the bill would provide a clause of reasonable defense if the patient is mentally incapacitated due to illness or substance use.

Congresswoman Madeleine Dean (D-PA) and Congressman Larry Bucshon (R-IN) have introduced companion legislation in the House.⁴

Supporting Organizations: Emergency Nurses Association, American Hospital Association, American College of Emergency Physicians, America's Essential Hospitals, American Medical Group Association, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Children's Hospital Association, American Nurses Association, Common Spirit Health, Vizient, West Virginia Hospital Association, Florida Hospital Association, Society of Hospital Medicine, Society of Thoracic Surgeons, American Academy of Emergency Medicine, Healthcare Workforce Coalition.

¹https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7244e1.htm?s_cid=mm7244e1_w#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20health%20workers%20experienced,with%20those%20who%20did%20not.

²<https://www.bls.gov/iif/home.htm>

³<https://www.pressganey.com/news/on-average-two-nurses-are-assaulted-every-hour-new-press-ganey-analysis-finds/>

⁴<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2584?s=2&r=6>