Date

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

The [INSERT NAME OF UNION], a union representing [INSERT NUMBER OF MEMBERS] registered nurses and health professionals in [INSERT STATE], supports S. 851, the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act.We are writing to ask you to co-sponsor this much-needed bill, which is a priority to our members.

Assaults and threats of violence in healthcare and social service settings are all too common and getting worse. [INSERT UNION] members have been [DESCRIBE PAST ASSAULTS] and have suffered career-ending injuries, including broken bones, brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder. Even those who avoid serious injury report lasting anxiety that impacts their ability to care for their patients or clients.

The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act will require the creation of safety plans to prevent workplace assaults in healthcare and social services settings. Healthcare and social service workers—people who care for our elderly, sick and vulnerable populations—need safety plans supported by evidence-based solutions. According to a 2018 survey from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, these workers experience 71 percent of reported workplace violence injuries, and they are nearly five times more likely than other workers to be assaulted on the job. This problem has gotten worse over the past decade. Between 2008 and 2018, the rate of violent injuries grew by 143 percent in hospitals, 149 percent in psychiatric and substance use treatment facilities, and 151 percent in social service settings.

With this bill, OSHA will issue an interim standard within one year of enactment and a final standard within 42 months. The bill is based on OSHA’s guidance on developing a prevention programs. The Government Accountability Office found evidence that these programs can reduce the number and severity of violent incidents.[[1]](#endnote-1) OSHA agreed to develop this standard nearly three years ago, but no progress has been made on the standard, while the rate of workplace assaults continues to climb. Without Congressional action, it can take years or decades for OSHA to issue a standard. The GAO found that the average time for OSHA standard development is seven years, but many standards take far longer.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Under S. 851, stakeholders will have ample opportunity to provide comment before implementation of the final standard, including written comments, small business reviews and public hearings.

By becoming a co-sponsor of the bill, you can help address this crisis. We would be more than happy to discuss this with staff in your district offices.Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[INSERT UNION LEADER’S NAME]
[INSERT UNION LEADER’S POSITION]

1. Government Accountability Office, *Workplace Safety and Health: Additional Efforts Needed to Help Protect Health Care Workers from Workplace Violence,* GAO-16-11; (Washington, D.C., 2016). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Government Accountability Office, *Workplace Safety and Health, Multiple Challenges Lengthen OSHA’s Standard Setting*, GAO-12-330, April, 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)