Dear Editor,

The House of Representatives has just passed the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act (H.R. 1309), a bill to require the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to develop a standard that will help protect \_\_\_\_\_ like me from assaults at work. The standard will require hospitals and other healthcare and social service employers to develop programs to help prevent violence. This is important to me because I experienced/witnessed/worry about \_\_\_\_\_\_.

Assaults in healthcare and social services are common—people who work in healthcare and social services are nearly five times more likely to be assaulted at work as the rest of the labor force, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

And the problem is growing worse—the rate of injuries from assaults rose by 143 percent in hospitals and 149 percent in psychiatric and substance use treatment facilities between 2008 and 2018. This is why it is critical that the Senate also pass the bill (S. 851)—because on average it takes OSHA seven years to develop a new standard. Healthcare and social service workers need protection now, not in seven or more years.

This solution is not a one-sized fits all regulation that will require all facilities to use the same cookie cutter plan—it is a common sense rule that will require them to develop prevention programs that are tailored to the needs for their facility. It will not eliminate all assaults, but it can prevent many and reduce the severity of injuries for many workers—while also helping to keep patients safe.

Prevention of violence is possible. AFT nurses, healthcare workers and social service workers are counting on the Senate to protect those who care for our communities.

Sincerely,