

May 8, 2025

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Angus S. King Jr.
United States Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Hyde-Smith and King:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinical partners — including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers — and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) applauds you for your leadership in introducing S. 1600, the Save Healthcare Workers Act.

For the past several years, health care workers across the nation have experienced a sharp increase in incidences of workplace violence, with no sign that this trend is receding. Despite the diligent efforts of hospitals and health systems to prevent violence and protect their staff, health care workers remain five times more likely than any other type of worker to be physically attacked on the job, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Violence in health care settings has implications beyond the injuries sustained by the dedicated health care workforce. Our member hospitals and health systems report that workplace violence and intimidation make it more difficult for clinical staff to provide quality patient care. Providers cannot deliver attentive care when they are afraid for their personal safety, distracted by disruptive patients or family members, or traumatized from prior attacks. In addition, violent attacks at health care facilities can delay urgently needed care for other patients, reduce employee productivity and increase the likelihood of adverse events.

However, despite the proliferation of workplace violence and its deleterious effects on our health care system, no federal law protects the health workforce from assault or intimidation. In contrast, federal laws criminalize assault and intimidation against aircraft and airport workers. Vigorous enforcement of these federal statutes has helped create a safer traveling environment, deter violent behavior and ensure that offenders face severe consequences for their actions.



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Your bipartisan legislation, modeled after the federal statute protecting aircraft and airport workers, would make it a federal crime to assault a hospital employee, with enhanced penalties applicable to acts that involve the use of a deadly or dangerous weapon, result in serious bodily injury to the health care worker, or are committed during an emergency declaration. Your bill would also direct the Government Accountability Office to study the effect of these provisions on workplace violence in health care settings.

Ensuring a safe and secure environment for our workforce is essential to providing quality care to the patients and communities we serve. America's hospitals and health systems are pleased to support your legislation and stand ready to work with you to ensure its passage.

Sincerely,

/s/

Richard J. Pollack
President and Chief Executive Officer