

Submitter: Laurie Nichols

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure: SB851

I'm writing in support of SB 851 with amendments to eliminate the need to prove intent and health harm.

In his book *Dying For A Paycheck* (2018), Stanford professor Jeffrey Pfeffer says, "...our analyses indicate that about half of the deaths and about a third of the incremental costs from workplace conditions appear to be potentially preventable if the United States were more similar to other advanced industrialized economies.... The United States experiences about 59,000 excess deaths and about \$63 billion in incremental costs annually compared to what would be predicted given its per capita income level."

Silent-killer stress is the partner of workplace abuse. Workplace stress is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S.. When employers ignore employee well-being internally to avoid liability, the uninsured health care, TANF, food stamps/SNAP, housing, and heat costs can be externalized on to the taxpayer. Prevention is both less expensive and more effective than remediation. Individual outcomes such as health harm, financial ruin, and career loss can be direct effects to targeted and victimized employees. The indirect effects reverberate to others in the workplace, families, communities, and society.

Employers are the judges, juries, and executioners of workplace abuse. Four decades of research reveal that it's been detrimental to leave the psychological safety of employees up to employers. We need legislation that will stop the perpetration of abuse and the violation of basic human rights. The EEOC recently reiterated that we want to stop harassing behaviors as soon as possible.

The present state of our workplaces are as follows:

A Zogby National Scientific Survey revealed over 60 million employees were bullied in 2017.

The U.S. Department of Justice has called the workplace "the most dangerous place to be in America."

The Center for Disease Control has classified workplace violence as a national epidemic.

U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health stated that homicide in the workplace is the fastest-growing form of murder. One million people are physically assaulted in the workplace every year. When verbal violence is factored in, it increases.

According to the World Health Organization in 2017, close to 800,000 people die due

to suicide associated with the abuse every year.