

Submitter: Whitney Champion
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB4088

In support of HB 4088.

As a healthcare worker (Registered Nurse) working in the Emergency setting at the busiest Emergency Department in the State, my coworkers and I are regularly exposed to violence from our patients. Some would argue "You signed up for this" or "You knew what you were getting into". I cannot express strongly enough how flawed that thinking is. I did not sign up to be hit, kicked, spit on, grabbed, shoved, have objects thrown at me or bitten. Understand, these individuals are capable of knowing right from wrong and choose to perpetuate violence against those of us tasked with providing them healthcare services. I signed up to use my specific skill set to care for people needing help in the form of healthcare and I feel I have the right to expect advocacy from my employer and legal protection in the form of state laws while providing that care. I would like to see individuals who are free of cognitive impairment and intentionally perpetuate acts of violence be held accountable for their violent actions. It saddens me that Police, Fire, EMS and others have the right to prosecute these offenders at a high level but that healthcare workers do not. It is disheartening to be physically assaulted or to know a coworker was assaulted and be told there is nothing that can be done to hold the offender rightfully accountable. Healthcare workers are expected to take this abuse and continue to show up for their jobs. There is a serious concern that healthcare workers will continue to leave the profession out of concern for their physical and mental health. Our jobs are full of risks and stress as it is and the effects of violence go beyond the physical aspect. It affects our mental health, our emotional health and over all wellbeing. We do not just "leave it at work", it comes home with us, it affects our families. Healthcare workers should not be expected to suffer physical and emotional trauma while on the job. This bill has outlined protective factors for those who are mentally/cognitively impaired. Therefore, I do not feel like there is good reason for this bill to not be passed. We will not stop advocating and it is my hope that those who are not in healthcare take into account these personal testimonies from myself and others. We ask that you stand with us by giving us a voice. Help us, so that we can stand at our best to help you when you're in need of healthcare.

Sincerely, Whitney Champion BSN RN