



## Caring for Oregon

February 26, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary

In support of SB 170 -1

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) supports SB 170 -1. ONA represents a diverse community of more than 21,000 nurses, and health care professionals throughout Oregon. Together, we use our collective power to advocate for critical issues impacting patients, nurses, and health care professionals including a more effective, affordable and accessible healthcare system; better working conditions for all health care professionals; and healthier communities.

SB 170 -1 would maintain that it is a misdemeanor to assault an individual while the individual is working in their usual workplace setting but elevate any third offense to a felony.

**Workplace violence prevention is among ONA's highest priorities this legislative session:**

Health care and social assistance workers are five times more likely to be assaulted than workers generally. The health care and social assistance sector accounted for 73 percent of all nonfatal workplace assaults in the U.S. in 2021-2022 (Bureau of Labor Statistics). This amounted to over 14 incidents per 10,000 workers – a far higher rate than for all industries taken together (3 incidents per 10,000 workers). Sixty-nine percent of incidents required workers to take days away from work. Violence at work is likely far greater than the available data shows due to inadequate reporting systems and workers' fear of isolation, embarrassment, and reprisal (Richardson, 2018).

ONA members would like to see the penalty for assaulting a healthcare worker increased to a felony upon a severe fist offense when appropriate, however we appreciate the step forward that this bill takes.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paige Spence".

Paige Spence

Director of Government Relations