

# PROTECT WORKERS FROM VIOLENCE ON THE JOB



## **SUPPORT H.R. 1309: Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act**

### **QUICK FACTS:**

- Workplace violence is a serious and growing problem for workers in America.
- Workplace violence is the third-leading cause of death on the job. One of every 6 workplace deaths are from workplace violence—more than from equipment or fires and explosions.
- Workplace violence results in more than 28,000 serious, lost-time injuries for workers each year.
- Health care and social service workers are at greatest risk of violence on the job because of their direct contact with patients and clients.
- In the last decade, the rate of serious workplace violence injuries increased by 69% in health care and social assistance.
- Workplace violence is foreseeable and preventable.
- A federal OSHA workplace violence standard is needed to protect health care and social service workers from unnecessary injuries and deaths.

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) has introduced legislation (**H.R. 1309**) to protect workers from violence on the job. The legislation would require the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue a workplace violence prevention standard, requiring employers in the health care and social service sectors to develop and implement a plan to protect their employees from workplace violence.

### **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLANS:**

- Are tailored to specific workplaces and employee populations;
- Require identification and control of hazards, improved reporting, training for workers and management, and evaluation of policies and procedures;
- Lead to workplace improvements such as emergency response systems, surveillance and monitoring systems, improved lighting, safe staffing levels and other strategies identified by the employers and employees to keep workers safe.

**An enforceable OSHA standard is necessary to prevent foreseeable, serious and life-altering violence against workers in hospitals, nursing homes and social service settings.** Keeping workers safe from violence on the job will also protect patients.

Fifteen years ago, OSHA issued voluntary guidance to employers on how to prevent violence in these workplaces, but the problem has only become worse. Voluntary guidelines are not sufficient. Some states, including California and New York, have passed standards to protect workers from violence, but under the Trump administration, federal OSHA has refused to act.

**Contact your member of Congress (844-332-8460) and urge him or her to support and co-sponsor H.R. 1309: Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act.**

# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE FACTS\*

**Workplace Assaults Are a Serious Problem:** In 2017, workplace violence was responsible for more than 450 workplace homicides and more than 28,000 serious, lost-time injuries for workers.

- Women are disproportionately affected: Workplace homicide is the second-leading cause of work-related death for women and the fifth for men; it is responsible for 22% of women killed on the job. Two of every 3 serious workplace violence events are suffered by women.
- Workplace violence injuries are severe and life altering: Workers miss a median of eight days from work due to an injury from a work-related assault.
- While the overall rate of workplace injuries has declined significantly in the past two decades, the rate of workplace violence injuries has increased.

**Health Care and Social Service Workers Are at Greatest Risk:** Health care and social service workers experience the highest rate of serious injury due to workplace violence at 13.7 per 10,000 workers, compared with 2.9 for all workers.

- In 2017, psychiatric hospitals had the highest-ever-recorded rate of serious injury due to workplace violence (181.1 per 10,000 workers). Hospitals and nursing and residential care facilities also have high rates.
- Nurses, psychiatric aides, nursing assistants and social workers are at especially high risk of injury from assaults on the job.
- State mental health and substance abuse social workers have extraordinarily high rates of assault-related injury at 278.7 per 10,000 workers. State social and human service assistants, and child, family and school social workers also are greatly at risk.
- State government health care workers are nine times more likely to suffer an assault-related injury than private-sector health care workers.
- Patients and other clients are responsible for two-thirds of serious, lost-time workplace violence injuries.

**Workplace Violence Is a Worsening Problem:** In the last decade (2008–2017), the incidence of workplace violence increased 69% in health care and social assistance (private industry).

- Workplace homicides nearly doubled for workers in health care and social assistance in the last two years.
- Since 2008, the workplace violence injury rate in private hospitals and home health services more than doubled, with the rate in psychiatric and substance abuse hospitals increasing by 158%.

