



February 1, 2016

Chair Paul Holvey
House Business and Labor Committee
900 Court St. - State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Holvey and members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Pantalone. I am a Mental Health Therapy Coordinator at Oregon State Hospital (OSH). I have been working at Oregon State Hospital for the past 29 years and I have worked in many different programs including Forensic maximum security and medium security, Gero-psychiatric, Medical, Children's and on the Adult Civil commit units. I have been involved on numerous committees and spent approximately 5 years teaching Prevention and Management of Aggressive Behavior.

The common concern that has come from each area I have worked is the fears staff has of being injured, possibly disabled, while responding to a violent act. The other concern has been the fear of retribution because staff was acting in a manner to protect themselves, or another person, from imminent personal injury.

I can attest to the injuries I have received over the years: knee injuries, back injuries, head lacerations, bites, scratches, gouges, bruises, strains, sprains and much more. I have also seen the physical damage that has been done to many staff, at times career ending.

I have also personally dealt with the stress that comes from walking on a unit that is called "out of control" by the staff that are leaving for the day, wondering if this would be the shift that something happened to me and I would no longer have this as my way to make a living.

I am in no way degrading the clientele we care for and want to make it clear that their care and protection is our top priority. Even as this group of clients seem to be the forgotten of society I feel that staff that work in the capacity in which we work are also forgotten, set aside and not really dealt with.

We are asking that even as we strive to make a difference in a high stress, high injury profession that it is recognized that the stress and physical abuse that we endure takes a toll on our wellbeing. It would be good to take care of those that are giving so much of themselves for the good of our clientele and the state as a whole. We are often left with the burden of trying to make ends meet when we fall short of being able fulfill the

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requirements of our positions due to the damage done physically, as well as emotionally.

I respectfully thank you for having this opportunity to share my years of experience working at Oregon State Hospital.