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TO: Chair Monnes Anderson  
Vice - Chair Linthicum  
Members of the Senate Committee on Healthcare

FR: Jess Giannettino Villatoro, Political Director, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: Support for SB 823, Protecting Healthcare Workers Against Violence

March 20, 2019

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across the state and is proud to be a voice for all workers in the legislative process. We firmly believe that all workers should be safe from violence in their workplace. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), approximately 75 percent of nearly 25,000 workplace assaults reported annually occurred in health care and social service settings and workers in health care settings are four times more likely to be victimized than workers in private industry. For these reasons we support SB 823, with the forthcoming amendments.<sup>1</sup>

The National Crime Victimization Survey showed health care workers have a 20 percent higher chance of being the victim of workplace violence than other workers. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data show that violence-related injuries are four times more likely to cause health care workers to take time off from work than other kinds of injuries. The Joint Commission's Sentinel Event data show 68 incidents of homicide, rape, or assault of hospital staff members over an eight-year period.<sup>2</sup>

SB 823 addresses incidents of workplace violence in health care by:

- Enabling front-line health care staff in hospitals and other direct care settings to have access to required data on assaults of employees that take place on the premises and;
- Strengthening protections against employment related retaliation for staff that make good faith reports of violent incidents occurring to them or their co-workers and;
- Requiring a robust security assessment in hospital facilities throughout the state to aid in reinforcing violence prevention programs

The Oregon AFL-CIO strongly encourages a yes vote on SB 823 with the forthcoming amendments. SB 823 presents the legislature with an opportunity to ensure that health care workers have better tools to address and ultimately reduce the incidents of workplace violence in their places of employment.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/SEA\\_59\\_Workplace\\_violence\\_4\\_13\\_18\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/SEA_59_Workplace_violence_4_13_18_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/SEA\\_59\\_Workplace\\_violence\\_4\\_13\\_18\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/SEA_59_Workplace_violence_4_13_18_FINAL.pdf)