

Date: February 13, 2024  
To: The House Committee On Judiciary  
From: Chris Rompala RN  
Re: **Testimony in Support of HB 4088-2**

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Wallan and Andersen, and members of the committee,

My name is Chris Rompala, I am a nurse and ONA leader. Oregon Nurses Association has for many years been pained by the trend of rising workplace violence and has worked to find solutions. We support HB 4088-2 because it solidifies for our state a set of new approaches which the severity of the problem calls on all of us to embrace.

I have seen violence committed against workers in hospitals hurt us in broad and deep ways. Injuries take people out of work. Emotional and psychological aspects create lasting difficulty for our lives at work and at home. Moral injury and physical risk factors drive people from the profession. Depleted yet essential workers are further stretched in their now-acknowledged — depressingly enough — societal role in holding the health care system together by a thread.

Here are just a few retellings gathered from Oregon Nurses Association members which are representative of bedside care today and indicative of these dynamics I am talking about:

- Uncontrollable patients throw things at staff, and thus are able to prolong when they have managed to keep distance from staff who are trying to de-escalate them — urinals, food trays, office items.
- In the middle of the night often, on Med/Surg, agitated patients hit nurses.
- A patient's family member who is known to be abusive and even stalking toward hospital staff is not flagged by management for notification to other staff or removal from the facility.
- The specific cause-and-effect for serious injury for the nurse in a workplace violence incident being: the nurse providing something the patient needs but doesn't want, often something life-saving. The nurse is saving a life and getting an injury for it.

These feel intolerable to the health care worker experiencing them and make for an intolerable situation, systemically speaking. In the whole picture of workplace violence policy, there should be consequences for those who knowingly act to hurt others, there should be signage and worker privacy standards, there should be investment for hospitals to install and upkeep security measures, there should be strong and expansive safety committees, and there should be reporting methods which continue to drive parties to act on the problem. HB 4088-2 is a gain in all these areas. Nurses across Oregon urge your support.