**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE APRIL 2020 AS “WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION MONTH” IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE HIGH RATE OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN HEALTH CARE EMPLOYMENT SECTORS, AND TO ENCOURAGE HEALTH CARE EMPLOYERS ACROSS THE STATE TO PARTNER WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO HOST WORKPLACE VIOLENCE TRAINING PROGRAMS AND TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE OCCURRENCE OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.

Whereas, all employees deserve a workplace free from violence. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration defines workplace violence as “any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site”; and

Whereas, 2015 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that incidents of serious workplace violence are four times more common in health care than in other private industries; and

Whereas, the health care sector makes up just nine percent of the overall U.S. workforce, but it experiences nearly as many violent injuries as all other industries combined; and

Whereas, between 2005 and 2014, the rate of health care workplace violence increased by one hundred ten percent in private sector hospitals; and

Whereas, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that while under twenty percent of all workplace injuries happen to health care workers, the same health care workers suffer fifty percent of all assaults; and

Whereas, eighty percent of serious violent injuries against health care workers were caused by interactions with patients. Health care assault rates correlate with time spent in direct patient contact, making nurses, nurses’ aides, and other health care assistants the most frequent victims of attack; and

Whereas, in 2013, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, psychiatric aides experienced the highest rate of violent injuries, ten times higher than any other group, followed by nursing assistants and registered nurses; and

Whereas, in addition to patients, perpetrators of health care workplace violence include visitors, coworkers, or others, and many incidents go unreported. According to the Journal of Emergency Nursing study, only about twenty‑nine percent of nurses who experienced a physical attack reported the incident; and

Whereas, members of the AFT Nurses and Health Professionals frequently describe impediments to reporting incidents of workplace violence either internally or to the police, which highlights the importance of strong partnerships between health care employers and law enforcement to ensure the implementation of effective workplace violence reporting procedures on which staff are provided training and the development of strategies to reduce the occurrence of workplace violence, such as through the locating of a police substation on a hospital campus; and

Whereas, South Carolina is one of three states that does not have enhanced penalties for violence against health care workers, though legislation is pending in the House of Representatives and Senate that would do so. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize the month of April 2020 as “Workplace Violence Prevention Month” in the State of South Carolina, raise awareness of the high rate of workplace violence in the health care employment sectors, and encourage health care employers across the State to partner with law enforcement agencies to host workplace violence training programs and to develop effective strategies to reduce the occurrence of workplace violence.

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