

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 60

BY REPRESENTATIVE DUSTIN MILLER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Health Works Commission, with assistance and guidance from the Nursing Supply and Demand Council and the Department of Children and Family Services, to study and make recommendations concerning potential policy changes for creating safer workplace environments for physicians, nurses, and social service workers in this state, and to report these recommendations to the legislative committees on health and welfare and on labor and industrial relations.

WHEREAS, in a 2016 report entitled "Workplace Safety and Health: Additional Efforts Needed to Help Protect Health Care Workers from Workplace Violence", the Government Accountability Office reported that, based on an analysis of Bureau of Justice Statistics data, over seven hundred thirty thousand cases of healthcare workplace assaults occurred over the five-year span from 2009 through 2013; and

WHEREAS, the healthcare and social service professions experience the highest rates of injuries caused by workplace violence; physicians, registered nurses, practical nurses, nurse aides, mental health professionals, home health providers, and personal care attendants are all at high risk of such injuries; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that healthcare and social service workers suffered sixty-nine percent of all workplace violence injuries in 2016 and are nearly five times as likely to suffer such injuries than workers overall; and

WHEREAS, workplace violence in healthcare and social service sectors is increasing; BLS data shows that private sector injury rates resulting from workplace violence in healthcare and social service professions rose by sixty-three percent between 2006 and 2016; and

WHEREAS, due to under-reporting of injuries sustained in episodes of workplace violence, actual injury rates from workplace violence are likely to be far higher than those reflected in official statistics; and

WHEREAS, violence against workers in healthcare settings results most commonly from assaults by patients, clients, and persons accompanying patients or clients; and

WHEREAS, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), of the nearly twenty-five thousand workplace assaults reported annually, approximately three quarters, or over eighteen thousand assaults, occur in healthcare and social service settings; and

WHEREAS, OSHA publishes a guidance document entitled "Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service Workers"; however, this guidance is currently not enforceable; and

WHEREAS, absent an enforceable standard for preventing workplace violence, employers are not ultimately required to implement a violence prevention program and workers have insufficient protection from violence in their places of employment; and

WHEREAS, in March and April of 2019, several healthcare workers in Louisiana were victims of high-profile workplace violence incidents; tragically, after one of these attacks, a Baton Rouge nurse died as a result of her injuries; and

WHEREAS, these violent incidents illustrate the critical importance of workplace safety in healthcare settings and the urgent need to raise awareness of this longstanding issue.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Health Works Commission, with assistance and guidance from the Nursing Supply and Demand Council and the Department of Children and Family Services, to study and make recommendations concerning potential policy changes, including but not limited to potential legislation, for creating safer workplace environments in this state for physicians, nurses, and social service workers, including workers employed by the department.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Health Works Commission shall submit a written report of the recommendations called for in this Resolution to the House Committee on Health and Welfare, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, the House Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations, and the Senate Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations on or before February 1, 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be dedicated to the memory of Lynne Truxillo.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the chairperson of the Louisiana Health Works Commission, the chairperson of the Nursing Supply and Demand Council, the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, and the family of Lynne Truxillo.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE