



Support

Senate Bill 846 – Peace Orders – Workplace Violence

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 10, 2020

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) strongly supports *Senate Bill 846 – Peace Orders-Workplace Violence*. The bill would establish a mechanism for employers to file peace orders on behalf of their employees to prevent workplace violence.

Addressing workplace violence is MNA's top priority. We have heard from countless Maryland nurses about the impact of workplace violence on their professional and personal lives. We believe that it is an epidemic, and the statistics support this conclusion. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 21% of nurses reported physical abuse, and this number is low because of underreporting. Surveys show that 30-50% of events are never reported in writing.ⁱ

We have recently partnered with the Maryland Hospital Association to form the Workplace Violence Prevention Collaborative. The goal of the collaborative is to identify and promote best practices in preventing and addressing workplace violence incidents. We have begun a rigorous initiative to identify those best practices.

We have identified that nurses and other health care employees are afraid of reporting any workplace violence incidents to law enforcement and the legal system. Over and over again, we have heard that nurses are afraid of having their personal address on legal documents. This legislation offers an innovative solution. If employers can file peace orders, then there will be the opportunity to keep the personal address of the employee from becoming public.

The bill also provides employers a mechanism for shouldering the responsibility for navigating the legal process of filing a peace order. This reduces the stress on the employee while recovering from a workplace violence incident.

We urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any assistance with this legislation, please contact Robyn Elliott at (443) 926-3443 or relliott@policypartners.net.

The Maryland Nurses Association, a constituent member association of the American Nurses Association (ANA), representing Maryland's professional nurses since 1904

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ⁱ OSHA 3826. Workplace Violence in Healthcare. Understanding the Challenge.
(2015). <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3826.pdf>