



## ACTION ALERT

### Urge Your Congressional Lawmakers to Cosponsor the Protecting Social Workers and Health Professionals from Workplace Violence Act (S. 2880/H.R. 5138)

The bipartisan Protecting Social Workers and Health Professionals from Workplace Violence Act is urgently needed legislation that will strengthen workplace protections for social workers and health care professionals. The legislation was introduced on November 18 by Sens. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), a social worker, and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Reps. Julia Brownley (D-CA-26) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY-21). It will create a federal grant program within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to enable employers to purchase and deploy safety equipment (such as security cameras and GPS locators), make facility improvements, implement safety training programs, and provide support services for professionals who have been victims of violence.

Between 2011-2013, there were 23,000 workplace assaults, and nearly 75% of these were in health care and social service settings (Occupational Health and Safety Administration, 2016). These alarming statistics do not capture the substantial number of unreported assaults, which, according to one survey, are as high as 85% of all assaults (American Federation of Government Employees, 2016). Addressing violence, including workplace assaults in social work practice settings has long been a need and a priority. A 2004 national study by the National Association of Social Workers of 10,000 licensed social workers found that 44% of the respondents reported facing personal safety issues in their primary employment setting and 30% felt that their employers did not adequately address safety issues. What's more, far too many social workers and health care professionals have died due to violence on the job.

Reducing workplace violence is a key success factor in addressing burnout and increasing retention. This is important nationwide, but especially in rural areas where there is a shortage of qualified mental health and health providers. Preventing workplace violence is essential in providing a healing environment for clients. When clients witness or perpetuate violence in these settings, it can set back treatment months if not years.

Please reach out to your lawmakers now to encourage them to cosponsor these bills and invest in the safety of our workforce!

#### Take Action

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any follow up questions, I can be reached at [contactus.naswnyc@socialworkers.org](mailto:contactus.naswnyc@socialworkers.org).

Sincerely,



Dr. Claire Green-Forde, LCSW, Executive Director, NASW-NYC