

House Passes Bonamici-Sponsored Bill to Protect Safety of Health Care, Social Service Workers

WASHINGTON, DC [11/21/19] – Today the House passed legislation sponsored by Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01) to protect health care and social service workers from workplace violence.

The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act, H.R. 1309, would direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to establish a workplace violence prevention standard that requires health care and social service employers to develop and implement a plan to protect their employees from workplace violence. It also protects workers who report incidents of workplace violence from retaliation.

According to a November 2018 report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care and social service workers are four times more likely to suffer from a workplace violence injury than workers in other sectors. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration does not currently have standards to reduce workplace violence injuries for health care and social service workers.

Bonamici spoke in support of the legislation on the House floor. Video of her remarks can be found [here](#). The text of her remarks is available below.

“A few years ago, two workers in Oregon were tragically wounded in a worksite stabbing at an organization that provides essential support services to youth who are facing addiction, homelessness, and behavioral health issues,” **Bonamici said on the House floor.** “Following the incident, Oregon AFSCME members organized to improve difficult working conditions that were compromising the quality of services for vulnerable clients and the safety of the employees.

“Unfortunately, the experience of these workers is too common. According to a November 2018 report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care and social service workers face a disproportionate risk of on-the-job violence and injuries.

“The workers in Oregon, and health care and social service workers across the country, need evidence-based workplace violence prevention plans, tailored to the needs of the populations they serve. And that is why I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 1309, introduced by my colleague Congressman Courtney.

“Health care and social service workers help care for our family, our friends, and loved ones. Today, we have the chance to support their well-being in the workplace.”

The legislation is endorsed by: AFL-CIO, American Federation of Government Employees, AFSCME, SEIU, Teamsters, United Auto Workers, United Steelworkers, Communication Workers of America, International Association of Fire Fighters, American Federation of Teachers, American Nurses Association, National Nurses United, Emergency Nurses Association, American Psychiatric Nurses Association, American College of Emergency Physicians, National Association of Social Workers, American Society of Safety Professionals, and National Council for Occupational Safety and Health.