

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6643

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 2, 1996

Title: An act relating to prevention of workplace violence in health care settings.

Brief Description: Providing for the prevention of workplace violence in health care settings.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Heavey, Fairley, Kohl and Fraser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/31/96, 2/2/96 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Quigley, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; Deccio, Fairley, Franklin, Moyer, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Wood.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

Background: Many recent studies show that violence in the workplace is now a significant cause of death in America. For some groups, such as adult women, and women workers under 18, violence on the job is the leading cause of workplace mortality. Some health care facilities have experienced increasing rates of workplace violence.

Summary of Bill: Workplace violence prevention plans are required, as a condition of on-going licensure and certification, in "all health care settings." The workplace violence prevention plan includes security considerations and policies, including the identification, management and appropriate response to violent incidents. The "health care setting" forms a committee responsible for the plan, and includes persons with expertise in security measures. Employees receive violence prevention training. "Health care settings" report their plans to the Department of Health, which compiles a report for the Legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 1996.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Violence is increasing in hospitals and clinics. Health care employee education and violence prevention training is needed.

Testimony Against: Violence prevention is an important goal, but the scope of the bill is too broad and it would burden small offices and hospitals with excessive costs. Making compliance a condition of licensure is problematic.

Testified: PRO: Sharon Ness, Nurses Union; Diane Sand, Loc. 101; Robby Stern, WSLC-AFL/CIO; Ellie Menzies, SEIU; CON: Carl Nelson, WSMA; Jeff Larson, WONA, WANP; Robb Menaul, WSHA; Kathy Stout, DOH; Gary Barnes, certified health care protection specialist.