

Testimony of Joanne Chapin, RN

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AFT Local 5101

Jurisdictional VP Health Care, AFT Connecticut

**Raised Bill 275: An Act Concerning Workplace Violence Prevention and
Response in the Health Care Setting**

Public Hearing

March 7, 2012

Good Morning, Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and the members of the Public Health Committee. I am Joanne Chapin, a staff RN in the One Day Surgical Unit of New Milford Hospital and President of the New Milford Hospital RNs. I am also proud to serve as Jurisdictional VP for Health Care for AFT CT, where I represent 6,000 health care workers and the 28,000 members of AFT CT.

I am submitting testimony today in opposition to Raised Bill 275. As an RN with 21 years experience I understand and have witnessed the costs of violence and aggression on health care professionals. Last year, when this legislation was passed, we established that violence was increasing in the workplace and is moving at a more accelerated pace in the health care setting.

Historically, aggression and violence was always been considered part of the “job” for health care workers. As a result of this thinking, some health care administrators have been either slow to respond to initiatives to mitigate this problem or to support staff. Professionally, the health care worker is expected to be able to defuse a potentially volatile situation and may be considered a failure by administration if things escalate.

By changing the current language from any *act which may constitute an assault or related offense, as described in part V of chapter 952, to of violence*, weakens the intent of the original bill. It is also worrisome on who will be making the determination on what constitutes a reportable event. What will be more important to the institution, the well being of the individuals involved or the reputation of that facility?

Connecticut took a large step forward in improving the safety of the health care work environment last year. Raised Bill 275 will hurt this progress and make our jobs more stressful and dangerous. I urge you not to support this bill.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony.

Joanne Chapin, RN