



**Danbury Nurses' Union Unit #47 Local 5047**

**AFT-CT, AFT Healthcare, AFL- CIO**

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**Testimony of**

**Mary Consoli, President**

**Danbury Nurses' Union Unit #47, AFT Local 5047, AFL-CIO**

**To Representative Betsey Ritter, Senator Terry B. Gerratana  
and members of the Public Health Committee**

**Re: Raised S.B. No 275 An Act Concerning Workplace Violence Prevention and  
Reporting**

**March 7, 2012**

My name is Mary Consoli and I am President of the Danbury Nurses' Union Unit #47, AFT Local 5047, a labor union representing 650 registered nurses at Danbury Hospital. I am speaking on behalf of our members to oppose Raised Senate Bill 275. We are asking you to maintain the current language of the law, An Act Concerning Work Place Violence Prevention and Response in Health Care Settings.

Work place violence in healthcare institutions is alive and well. Over the last two years more research has been done, but the results have not varied. Work place violence is on the rise and continues to be under reported. The increase in violence seen in healthcare settings is a microcosm of society. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 72% of health care workers do not report incidents of work place violence. The culture continues to exist that it is "part of the job". This culture tolerance of violence toward nurses and other health care workers must be changed. Until this happens, we need protections. Nurses and health care workers will leave the profession or not enter. We need our current law that supports a zero tolerance for work place violence. The proposed changes of Senate Bill 275 will destroy the preventive nature and intent of this law.

If a person went into a grocery store and complained about an item, and made verbal threats and was abusive with profanity, the police would be called. This same tolerance level of violence needs to apply to healthcare. In the June Sentinel Event Alert of the Joint Commission Database, it is acknowledged that only aggravated assaults are reported, administrators do not want to reflect badly on hospital image.

In July, 2006, a nurse in our Labor and Delivery room was threatened and verbally abused by a patient's husband. The nurse did not feel safe to leave the area because the husband left and his where about was not known. She feared he would do her harm. She could not complete her shift and a colleague walked her to her car. In October 2009, a

nurse in our In- patient Psychiatric Unit had a patient write poems about her that were suggestive and threatening. And in July 2011, a nurse on our 12 Tower Ortho- Neuro Unit was verbally abused and threatened by an aggressive patient. She has submitted written testimony. We cannot exclude threatening behavior.

The law should not be changed because the federal requirements for security in healthcare centers that provide Medicare and Medicaid services are inadequate and the Joint Commission and OSHA do not set standards for safety. The shootings at Danbury Hospital and John Hopkins have brought work place violence to the headlines. It is reported in literature that violence prevention programs have increased, this is encouraging but not enough, we need our current law to ensure compliance and enforce protection of health care workers.

Workplace violence is not part of a health care provider's job. It is a recognized occupational hazard that should be controlled and prevented with both, comprehensive violence prevention plans and good laws such as Connecticut's work place violence law.

I am asking you on behalf of all our members and all health care workers in Connecticut to oppose Raised Senate Bill 275.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Consoli, RN, BSN  
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