

**Written Statement for the Record
American Nurses Association
“Building a Safer Future: Private-Sector Strategies for Emerging Safety Issues”
U.S. House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Workforce Protections**

May 13, 2026

The American Nurses Association (ANA) appreciates the Subcommittee’s focus on private-sector strategies to improve workplace safety. As the Subcommittee considers this topic, ANA highlights the serious safety challenges that the healthcare workforce—particularly nurses – face in their workplaces. Nurses have been ranked the most trusted profession for 24 consecutive years. That trust reflects nurses’ frontline role in delivering care, but it also underscores the urgency of addressing the conditions under which they work.

Today, unsafe workplace conditions—including violence and excessive mandatory overtime—are driving burnout and accelerating nurse attrition. This is not just a workforce issue; it is an access-to-care and cost issue. When nurses are driven to leave, care is delayed, costs rise, and communities—especially rural and underserved areas—are left behind. The private sector has not moved quickly or comprehensively enough to address these challenges. Approaches that have sought to address these challenges are often fragmented and lack important enforcement mechanisms. Congress has an opportunity to drive accountability and support targeted, practical solutions that strengthen the nursing workforce and improve patient access to care.

ANA is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation’s over five million registered nurses (RNs) through its constituent and state nurses associations, organizational affiliates, and individual members. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, bolstering the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating for healthcare issues that affect nurses and the public. ANA members also include the four APRN roles: nurse practitioners (NPs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs), certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), and certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs). Our nurses serve in multiple direct care, care coordination, and administration leadership roles, across the full spectrum of healthcare settings.

Ensure Safe Work Environments for Nurses

One of the most troubling issues leading to nurse burnout is the increasing incidences of workplace violence. *Seventy-five percent of the nearly 25,000 workplace assaults reported annually occurred in health care and social services settings. According to a recent survey, one in four nurses were physically assaulted at work and more than half of nurses*

experienced verbal threats or aggressive language in the past 12 months. This means that nurses are more likely to be exposed to workplace violence than police officers or prison guards. Workplace violence also costs the U.S. healthcare system \$151 billion per year, with an average of \$250,000 per incident due to post-event medical expenses, investments in preventative measures, and labor costs due to turnover. What these figures do not capture are the hidden costs of workplace violence-related incidents, such as the adverse impact on the mental health of healthcare practitioners and their patients. This challenge is so pervasive that a broad group of national healthcare and social services organizations issued a [joint statement](#) condemning workplace violence in recognition of National Workplace Violence Awareness Month in April.

To address the unacceptable status quo, ANA urges this subcommittee to consider and pass the *Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act* (H.R. 2531; 119th), which directs OSHA to issue a standard requiring health care and social service employers to write and implement a workplace violence prevention plan to prevent and protect their employees from violent incidents. This legislation passed in the U.S. House of Representatives during the 116th and 117th Congresses with significant bipartisan support. This subcommittee must act now to protect nurses and other health care workers from preventable and unacceptable instances of workplace violence by swiftly passing this bill.

Limit Mandatory Overtime for Nurses

The aviation, trucking, and marine industries have long been subject to limitations on work hours for their employees to ensure safety, performance, job satisfaction, and quality of life. Unfortunately, there are no limitations for nurses who are often required to work beyond their scheduled shift and return to work without sufficient time to rest between shifts. Nurses, who are subjected to these unsafe working conditions, often experience sleep deprivation, fatigue, and impaired vigilance, which can result in medical errors and poor patient safety.

Though outside of this committee’s jurisdiction, ANA highlights that Congress can meaningfully act to protect nurses and their patients through the enactment of the *Nurse Overtime and Patient Safety Act* when it is reintroduced (H.R. 7546; 118th). This bill would limit mandatory overtime for nurses and clarify when and how mandatory overtime should be utilized in the rare but logical circumstances when it becomes necessary. Notably, this legislation will not limit the ability of nurses to work voluntary overtime. ANA urges this subcommittee to consider the development and passage of comparable policies to ensure nurses are not put in positions where they feel they cannot safely deliver high-quality care to their patients.

Working Towards a Safer Future

Nurses and other health care workers must have safeguards that protect their work environments so that they are able to deliver high-quality care to patients across settings nationwide. Years of evidence and worsening trends confirm that the private sector’s solutions have failed to adequately protect these workers. As such, it is imperative that this subcommittee advance policies to address the underlying factors contributing to our nation’s nursing workforce crisis that are enforceable and promote accountability. ANA thanks the subcommittee for its leadership and for considering our perspective on this critical issue. We look forward to working with you to further examine the policy solutions that will lead to a safer future for our healthcare workforce and patients alike. Please contact Tim Nanof, ANA’s Executive Vice President for Policy and Government Affairs, at Tim.Nanof@ana.org with any questions.