

SENATE No. 1539

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Joan B. Lovely

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act requiring health care employers to develop and implement programs to prevent workplace violence.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Joan B. Lovely</i>	<i>Second Essex</i>	
<i>Paul R. Feeney</i>	<i>Bristol and Norfolk</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Robyn K. Kennedy</i>	<i>First Worcester</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Paul W. Mark</i>	<i>Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Erika Uytterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>John C. Velis</i>	<i>Hampden and Hampshire</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Adam Scanlon</i>	<i>14th Bristol</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Michael F. Rush</i>	<i>Norfolk and Suffolk</i>	<i>1/30/2023</i>
<i>Jacob R. Oliveira</i>	<i>Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester</i>	<i>1/30/2023</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2023</i>
<i>John F. Keenan</i>	<i>Norfolk and Plymouth</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	<i>Second Worcester</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Pavel M. Payano</i>	<i>First Essex</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>

<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>Second Suffolk</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>Adam Gomez</i>	<i>Hampden</i>	<i>3/23/2023</i>
<i>Julian Cyr</i>	<i>Cape and Islands</i>	<i>3/23/2023</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/23/2023</i>
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>First Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>3/23/2023</i>
<i>Susan L. Moran</i>	<i>Plymouth and Barnstable</i>	<i>4/3/2023</i>
<i>Manny Cruz</i>	<i>7th Essex</i>	<i>4/26/2023</i>
<i>Brendan P. Crighton</i>	<i>Third Essex</i>	<i>5/2/2023</i>
<i>Jessica Ann Giannino</i>	<i>16th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/31/2024</i>

SENATE No. 1539

By Ms. Lovely, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1539) of Joan B. Lovely, Paul R. Feeney, Robyn K. Kennedy, Jack Patrick Lewis and other members of the General Court for legislation to require health care employers to develop and implement programs to prevent workplace violence. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 4574 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—————
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**
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An Act requiring health care employers to develop and implement programs to prevent workplace violence.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 111 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

3 Section 238. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall, unless the context
4 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

5 “Employee”, an individual employed by a health care employer.

6 “Health care employer”, any individual, partnership, association, corporation, trust or any
7 person or group of persons operating a health care facility.

8 “Health care facility”, a hospital, licensed under section 51, the teaching hospital of the
9 University of Massachusetts medical school, a medium-security state correctional facility for
10 male inmates located in Plymouth county that is operated and maintained by a private company
11 under contract with the department of correction, or any state acute care facility, non-acute care
12 facility, continuing care facility and group homes operated, funded or subject to oversight by the
13 department of public health, the department of mental health or the department of developmental
14 services except a: (i) nursing home; (ii) rest home; (iii) clinic; (iv) mobile or portable clinic; (v)
15 mobile or portable clinic satellite; (vi) certified home health agency; (vii) adult day health; (viii)
16 hospice; (ix) hospice inpatient satellite; (x) ambulatory surgical center; (xi) renal dialysis; (xii)
17 outpatient physical therapy and speech pathology; and (xiii) temporary nursing agency; provided
18 that, a facility with more than 1 license or that is licensed to provide multiple services, shall be
19 considered a health care facility if the facility is licensed in at least 1 of the included categories.

20 “Workplace Violence”, conduct at the work site that is: (i) an unpermitted or harmful
21 touching of another person; (ii) an attempt or act to use some degree of physical force on another
22 person; or (iii) engaging in conduct that could be reasonably perceived as an intent to touch
23 without permission, use immediate physical force or injure a particular person now or in the
24 future, that if carried out would constitute a crime, and causes another person to reasonably
25 believe that the person has the intent and ability to carry out such conduct.

26 (b) Annually, each health care employer shall perform a facility specific risk assessment
27 that includes, but is not limited to, the standards determined by the department. The facility
28 specific risk assessment shall be done in cooperation with the employees of the health care
29 employer and any labor organization or organizations representing the employees, examining all
30 factors, which may put any of the employees at risk of workplace violence. The factors shall

31 include, but not be limited to: (i) working in public settings; (ii) guarding or maintaining property
32 or possessions; (iii) working in high-crime areas; (iv) working late night or early morning hours;
33 (v) working alone or in small numbers; (vi) uncontrolled public access to the workplace; (vii)
34 working in public areas where people are in crisis; (viii) working in areas where a patient or
35 resident may exhibit violent behavior; (ix) working in areas with known security problems; and
36 (x) working with insufficient qualified staff in 1 or more position titles to address foreseeable
37 risk factors.

38 (c) Based on the findings of the risk assessment in subsection (b), the health care
39 employer shall develop and implement a program to minimize the danger of workplace violence
40 to employees, which shall include appropriate employee training, and a system for the ongoing
41 reporting and monitoring of incidents and situations involving violence or the risk of violence.
42 Employee training shall include, in addition to all employer training program policies, methods
43 of reporting to appropriate public safety officials, bodies or agencies and processes necessary for
44 the filing of criminal charges.

45 (d) Each health care employer shall develop a written violence prevention plan setting
46 forth the employer's workplace violence prevention plan. The health care employer shall make
47 the plan available to each employee and provide the plan to any of its employees upon request.
48 The health care employer shall provide the plan to any labor organization or organizations
49 representing any of its employees. The plan shall include: (i) a list of those factors and
50 circumstances that may pose a danger to employees; (ii) a description of the methods that the
51 health care employer will use to alleviate hazards associated with each factor; including, but not
52 limited to, employee training and any appropriate changes in job design, staffing, security,

53 equipment or facilities; (iii) a post-incident debriefing process with affected staff; and (iv) a
54 description of the reporting and monitoring system.

55 (e) Each health care employer shall designate a senior manager responsible for the
56 development and support of an in-house crisis response team for employee-victims of workplace
57 violence. Said team shall implement an assaulted staff action program that includes, but is not
58 limited to, group crisis interventions, individual crisis counseling, staff victims' support groups,
59 employee victims' family crisis intervention, peer-help and professional referrals.

60 (f) Any health care employer who violates any rule, regulation or requirement made by
61 the department under authority hereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$2,000 for
62 each offense. The department or its representative or any aggrieved employee, any interested
63 party or any officer of any labor union or association, whether incorporated or otherwise, may
64 file a written complaint with the district court in the jurisdiction of which the violation occurs
65 and shall promptly notify the attorney general in writing of such complaint. The attorney general,
66 upon determination that there is a violation of any workplace standard relative to the protection
67 of the occupational health and safety of employees or of any standard of requirement of
68 licensure, may order any work site to be closed by way of the issuance of a cease and desist order
69 enforceable in the appropriate courts of the commonwealth.

70 (g) No employee shall be penalized by a health care employer in any way as a result of
71 such employee's filing of a complaint or otherwise providing notice to the department in regard
72 to the occupational health and safety of such employee or their fellow employees exposed to
73 workplace violence risk factors.

74 (h) Not less than every 180 days, each health care employer shall submit a report, on a
75 form prescribed by the commissioner of the department, of all incidents of workplace violence
76 reported to the health care employer that occurred at the health care facility on an employee, an
77 emergency medical technician, an ambulance operator or an ambulance attendant. The report
78 shall be submitted to the department and the office of the district attorney for the county where
79 the health care facility is located. Not more than 90 days after receiving the reports, the
80 department shall make the aggregate data statewide and by county publicly available; provided
81 that the department categorize the aggregate data by occupation and incident type.

82 SECTION 2. Chapter 149 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
83 section 52E the following section:-

84 Section 52F. (a) For purposes of this section, the following words shall, unless the
85 context clearly indicates otherwise, have the following meanings:-

86 “Employee”, an individual employed by a health care employer.

87 “Health care employer”, any individual, partnership, association, corporation or, trust or
88 any person or group of persons operating a health care facility.

89 “Health care facility”, a hospital, licensed under section 51, the teaching hospital of the
90 University of Massachusetts medical school, a medium-security state correctional facility for
91 male inmates located in Plymouth county that is operated and maintained by a private company
92 under contract with the department of correction, or any state acute care facility, non-acute care
93 facility, continuing care facility and group homes operated, funded or subject to oversight by the
94 department of public health, the department of mental health or the department of developmental
95 services except a: (i) nursing home; (ii) rest home; (iii) clinic; (iv) mobile or portable clinic; (v)

96 mobile or portable clinic satellite; (vi) certified home health agency; (vii) adult day health; (viii)
97 hospice; (ix) hospice inpatient satellite; (x) ambulatory surgical center; (xi) renal dialysis; (xii)
98 outpatient physical therapy and speech pathology; and (xiii) temporary nursing agency; provided
99 that, a facility with more than 1 license or that is licensed to provide multiple services, shall be
100 considered a health care facility if the facility is licensed in at least 1 of the included categories.

101 (b) A health care employer shall permit an employee to take up to 7 days of leave from
102 work in any 12 month period if: (i) the employee is a victim of an assault or assault and battery
103 which occurred in the line of duty and (ii) the employee uses the leave to seek or obtain victim
104 services or legal assistance; obtain a protective order from a court; appear in court or before a
105 grand jury; meet with a district attorney or other law enforcement official; or to address other
106 legal issues directly related to the assault or assault and battery.

107 (c) The leave taken pursuant to subsection (b) shall be paid.

108 (d) A health care employer may require an employee to provide documentation
109 evidencing that the employee is a victim of assault or assault and battery sustained in the line of
110 duty and that the leave taken is consistent with the conditions of subsection (b). An employee
111 shall provide such documentation to the health care employer within 5 business days after the
112 health care employer requests documentation relative to the employee's absence.

113 (e) An employee seeking leave from work pursuant to subsection (b) shall provide
114 advance notice of the leave to the employer in accordance with the employer's leave policy;
115 provided, however, that if an employee is absent on an unauthorized basis, the health care
116 employer shall not take any negative action against the employee if the employee, within 30 days
117 from the unauthorized absence or within 30 days from the last unauthorized absence in the

118 instance of consecutive days of unauthorized absences, provides documentation that the
119 unauthorized absence meets the criteria of subsection (b).

120 (f) All information related to the employee's leave taken pursuant to this section shall be
121 kept confidential by the health care employer and shall not be disclosed, except to the extent that
122 disclosure is: (i) requested or consented to, in writing, by the employee; (ii) ordered to be
123 released by a court of competent jurisdiction; (iii) required by federal or state law; (iv) required
124 in the course of an investigation authorized by law enforcement, including, but not limited to, an
125 investigation by the attorney general; or (v) necessary to protect the safety of the employee or
126 others employed at the workplace.

127 (g) No health care employer shall require an employee to exhaust all annual leave,
128 vacation leave, personal leave or sick leave available to the employee prior to requesting or
129 taking leave under this section.

130 (h) No health care employer shall coerce, interfere with, restrain or deny the exercise of,
131 or any attempt to exercise, any rights provided by this section or to make leave requested or
132 taken hereunder contingent upon whether or not the victim maintains contact with the alleged
133 abuser.

134 (i) No health care employer shall discharge or in any other manner discriminate against
135 an employee for exercising the employee's rights under this section. An employee who takes
136 leave under this section shall not lose any employment benefit accrued prior to the date on which
137 the leave taken under this section commenced as a result of taking said leave. Upon the
138 employee's return from said leave, the employee shall be entitled to restoration to the
139 employee's original job or to an equivalent position.

140 (j) Each health care employer shall post in a conspicuous place within the health care
141 facility a notice prepared or approved by the department indicating the rights and responsibilities
142 provided by this section. The notice shall be issued in English, Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole,
143 Italian, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Laotian, Khmer, Russian and any other language that is the
144 primary language of at least 10,000 or ½ of one per cent of all residents of the commonwealth.
145 The required workplace notice shall be in English and each language other than English which is
146 the primary language of 5 or more employees or self-employed individuals of that workplace, if
147 such notice is available from the department. Each health care employer shall notify each
148 employee not more than 30 days from the beginning date of the employee's employment, the
149 rights and responsibilities provided by this section, including those related to notification
150 requirements and confidentiality.

151 (k) This section shall not be construed to exempt an employer from complying with
152 chapter 258B, section 14B of chapter 268 or any other general or special law or to limit the rights
153 of any employee under said chapter 258B, said section 14B of chapter 268 or any other general
154 or special law.

155 SECTION 3. Section 13I of chapter 265 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020
156 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following paragraph:-

157 Any emergency medical technician, ambulance operator, ambulance attendant or a health
158 care provider as defined in section 240 of chapter 111, who is the victim of assault or assault and
159 battery at a health care facility, as such term is defined in said section 240, in the line of duty
160 shall be given the option of providing the address of the health care facility where the assault or
161 assault and battery occurred or of the labor organization in which they are a member in good

162 standing. In instances where the address of the health care facility is used or labor organization to
163 which the employee is a member in good standing, the health care facility or labor organization
164 shall ensure that the individual receives any documents pertaining to the assault or assault and
165 battery within 24 hours of receipt by the health care facility or labor organization. The health
166 care facility or labor organization shall demonstrate that it has provided any and all
167 documentation by obtaining a signature from the individual acknowledging receipt.

168 SECTION 4. The commissioner of public health shall adopt rules and regulations within
169 180 days of enactment of this act necessary to implement and enforce the purposes of section
170 240 of chapter 111 of the General Laws.