

May 5, 2023

The Honorable Larry Bucshon, MD  
United States House of Representatives  
2313 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Madeleine Dean  
United States House of Representatives  
150 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Representatives Bucshon and Dean:

On behalf of over 39,000 orthopaedic surgeons and residents represented by the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons, we wish to express our support for the “Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act”. This legislation would establish legal penalties for assaulting or intimidating hospital employees or those contracted by a hospital, the same protections that apply to flight crews and airline employees.

The AAOS is concerned about the rise in mass shootings and workplace violence. In June 2022, an orthopaedic surgeon was among four people killed in a shooting at a hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This tragic loss of life is becoming increasingly common in healthcare settings throughout the country. This has been especially true since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has placed significant strain on the healthcare system, and there have increasingly been reports of patients or family members threatening and harming healthcare workers<sup>1</sup>.

We are supportive of the provisions in the SAVE Act which would establish federal, criminal penalties for those who knowingly assault and intimidate hospital employees or those contracted by a hospital. The bill includes enhanced penalties for the use of a dangerous weapon that results in injury and acts committed during a public emergency, as well as exceptions for individuals who may be mentally incapacitated due to illness or substance use. We are also supportive of the provisions that authorize \$25 million in grant funding over 10 years to reduce violence and intimidation in hospitals. Additionally, this grant funding can be used for training, technology, and coordination with law enforcement.

Physicians and other health professionals are essential workers and must feel safe in the workplace. With the increase in physician burnout during the pandemic, threats and workplace violence are serious challenges that will delay quality of care and deter qualified people from entering the profession.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.aha.org/fact-sheets/2022-06-07-fact-sheet-workplace-violence-and-intimidation-and-need-federal-legislative?utm\\_campaign=aha-today&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter](https://www.aha.org/fact-sheets/2022-06-07-fact-sheet-workplace-violence-and-intimidation-and-need-federal-legislative?utm_campaign=aha-today&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter)

Thank you both for your leadership and introduction of the Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act. This legislation is a step in the right direction and will provide the necessary protection for our healthcare workforce. We look forward to the passage of this important legislation. Please feel free to contact Catherine Hayes at [hayes@aaos.org](mailto:hayes@aaos.org) if you have any questions or if the AAOS can further serve as a resource to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KTB' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin J. Bozic, MD, MBA, FAAOS  
AAOS President

cc: Paul Tornetta, III, MD, PhD, FAAOS, AAOS First Vice President  
Annunziato Amendola, MD, FAAOS, AAOS Second Vice President  
Thomas E. Arend, Jr., Esq., CAE, AAOS Chief Executive Officer  
Graham Newson, AAOS Vice President, Office of Government Relations