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Testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee
March 19, 2003

Presented by:
Doreen Begley, MS, RN, Nurse Executive
Nevada Hospital Association

Good morning Chairman Anderson and Committee Members. For the record my name is Doreen Begley, and I am the Nurse Executive for the Nevada Hospital Association, and I offer this testimony on their behalf. **The Nevada Hospital Association adamantly supports AB53.** This bill is both of a personal and professional interest to me, as I spent the first thirty years of my nursing career working in various emergency departments throughout the United States.

Having received my nurses training from Los Angeles County General Hospital School of Nursing, and spending the first seven years of my nursing career at San Francisco General Hospital, I then also worked in smaller, less urban facilities, such as Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee, and Maui Memorial Hospital, in Hawaii, and my last employer before my current position was Washoe Medical Center in Reno. These experiences have taught me one thing. There is no health care facility that is immune to the effects of, or the potential for, violence to occur.

When I was elected to the National Board of Directors for the Emergency Nurses Association from 1994-1999, I had the opportunity to testify before then Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher regarding the determination health care indicators. It was believed that in 1999 the presence (or absence) of violence from one's life was a strong Healthy People 2010 indicator. Violence was not then as prevalent as it has become today. However, that is no longer the case. The prevalence of violence has become widely spread and now has a very close association to us all. It seems that it is more the norm, than the exception.

As a staff nurse in the emergency department for thirty years, I was not only a witness to, but a victim of violent acts being thrust upon myself and my co-workers. With the escalation of drug wars, continued gang activity, and the ever increasing threats of terror and war, health care workers are placed in a particularly vulnerable position.

It is because of this escalation in violent acts that it has become necessary to protect the individuals who spend their days as health care providers caring for others. **The Nevada Hospital Association adamantly supports AB53, and any effort that can improve the safety of the workplace environment for its providers of health care.** Given the continuing concerns that we face with the severe nursing shortage in Nevada, this is one more area we can improve to recruit and retain nurses who are dedicated to saving lives. They must be able to provide that care in a safe work environment.

Thank you for allowing me this time to present to you. I am available to answer any questions.

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