



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shirley L. Huntley

## Violence Against Nurses

SHIRLEY L. HUNTLEY January 30, 2010



**News From**

**New York State**

**Senator Shirley L. Huntley**

**For Immediate Release:** January 30, 2010

**Contact:** Antonio Rodriguez | [arodrigu@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:arodrigu@senate.state.ny.us) | (518) 455-3531

**SENATE PASSES BILL TO INCREASE PROTECTION FOR NURSES**

**Legislation Raises Assault Penalty to Class C or D**

(D-Jamaica) Senator Shirley L. Huntley is pleased to announce that the New York State Senate has passed legislation (S. 4018) that will strengthen the penalties against individuals who commit acts of violence toward nurses.

Under this legislation, the definition of assault for a Class C or D felony on emergency medical services professionals will include registered nurses and licensed practical nurses along with peace officers, police officers and firefighters.

RNs and LPNs suffer from the highest proportion of injuries of any workers in the healthcare field. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, about 500,000 nurses are victims of violent crimes each year; they are commonly subjected to being spit on, kicked, punched, and threatened.

“Nurses save lives, even as they are forced to endure acts of violence and harassment,” said Senator Huntley. “This bill will deter offenders from committing these assaults, and provide nurses the safety and job satisfaction they deserve.”

Violence acts have contributed to a nursing shortage across New York, as many understaffed hospitals mean nurses often female work in a solitary situation with patients who are often mentally ill or suffer drug addiction.

Nurses are very important to the well being of patients in hospitals because they are often the first person a patient sees and interacts with the most. They play a significant role in the quality of care and treatment patients receive. Ensuring violent acts against nurses are punished in a proper and severe manner will alleviate many concerns they may experience on the job. This legislation will provide a safer work environment to nurses who help care for the sick and injured.

“We have to protect those who keep our communities safe and healthy,” the senator concluded.

The bill is awaiting action by the Assembly.

-30-