



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rich Funke

Senate Passes Funke Bill to Better Protect Patient Care Workers

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June 19, 2015

ISSUE:

- [Health Care](#)

Senator Rich Funke today announced that the New York State Senate recently passed legislation he sponsors to classify the assault of a worker providing direct patient care as Assault in the Second Degree. His bill, S.3621-A, would put patient care workers in parity with Registered Nurses, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians, who already receive increased protections while engaged in their official duties. The legislation passed the Senate with bipartisan support and is endorsed by the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA).

“Patient care workers deliver help to those in our community who need it most each and every day, and they deserve to know they are safe when they are on the job,” said Funke. “I’m proud this legislation would offer the same protections to patient care workers that are already afforded to nurses, firefighters, and paramedics because of the important work they do. Thank you to Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther and my fellow Senators for their support of this bill.”

As the general population ages, there is increasing demand for skilled health aides in a variety of hospital, center, or home care settings. Under S.3621, a patient care worker is defined as any staff, other than registered nurses, whose principle responsibility is to provide direct health care for one or more patients. This legislation would lead to greater protections for these workers, who often encounter difficult conditions and challenging patient-related issues on a daily basis. A recent survey of health care workers revealed that 25% of nursing home workers and 34% of nurses aides reported experiencing workplace violence and a quarter of those workers reported missing work as a result. Therefore this bill would not only protect workers, it would also reduce costs and improve efficiency at health care facilities throughout the state.

"All workers deserve a safe workplace," said CSEA President Danny Donohue. "This legislation will help deter violent attacks against workers who are simply trying to do their job of delivering care to those in need. I applaud the leadership of Senator Funke and Assemblywoman Gunther on this issue.

The bill has also passed the New York State Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther. It will be delivered to the Governor for consideration.