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MOORE PASSES LEGISLATION TO PROTECT NURSES FROM ASSAULT

BOSTON – The Senate on Thursday unanimously passed “An Act Relative to Assault on Health Care Providers,” (S.2383), filed by Senator Michael O. Moore, that strengthens protections for nurses and other healthcare providers against assault and battery during the performance of their jobs.

"Today marks a victory for health care professionals across the Commonwealth," said Sen. Moore. "Both doctors and patients depend on nurses to provide critical care. Nurses already face daunting obstacles in the course of their daily work; they should not be made to face abuse from those they are caring for. This bill highlights the pervasiveness of the problem, and will take steps towards addressing it."

The bill mandates a minimum of ninety days in prison or a fine of no less than \$500 for anyone who assaults a healthcare provider who is either treating or transporting them. According to a 2007 report by the Emergency Nurses Association, more than half of emergency room nurses report experiencing physical violence on the job, while a June 2008 study showed that workers in the healthcare sector are 16 times more likely to be the victim of on-the-job violence than any other service profession [Derrickson Moore, S. "Healthcare workers are more likely to face violence than any other worker in the service profession." 2008.].

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Moore, passed the House of Representatives last week. It is part of a larger push to protect the safety of health care professionals and improve overall quality of care. The bill also extends protections to Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists, amongst others. Such protections already exist for Emergency Medical Technicians.

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