

September 12, 2023

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senate  
284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joseph Manchin III  
U.S. Senate  
306 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rubio and Senator Manchin,

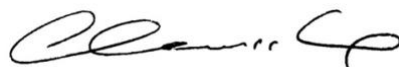
On behalf of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and our 40,000 members, thank you for introducing the “Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act.” This legislation is an important step addressing escalating rates of violence against emergency physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals who provide our health care safety net. ACEP appreciates your bipartisan leadership in working to provide safer health care workplaces for emergency physicians so that they can focus on providing high-quality care to their patients without worrying about their own personal safety.

Violence in the emergency department is a serious and growing concern, causing significant stress to emergency department staff and to patients who seek treatment in the emergency department (ED). According to a 2022 ACEP survey, two-thirds of emergency physicians reported being assaulted in the previous year alone, while more than one-third of respondents said they have been assaulted more than once. Overall, approximately 85 percent of emergency physicians said that the rate of ED violence had increased within the previous year. And even beyond the immediate physical harm and injuries suffered by health care professionals, the elevated risk of violence poses significant challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified health care professionals and contributes to greater levels of physician burnout. In fact, 87 percent of emergency physicians reported decreased productivity among their colleagues due to these violent encounters, and 85 percent reported emotional trauma and an increase in anxiety because of ED violence.

And unlike the highly publicized incidents of violence against airline and airport employees in recent years, violence against health care workers often remains largely invisible because of inadequate reporting and tracking of violent incidents, and other systemic barriers that do not hold violent individuals accountable for their actions. As a result of the inability to prosecute those who are arrested, many health care workers are discouraged from even pressing charges and being forced to accept that it’s “just part of the job.” Violence is not accepted in any other workplace, and it must not be accepted especially in a setting focused on improving the health and well-being of individuals. Further, our patients deserve high-quality care in a place free of physical dangers from other patients or individuals, and care from staff that is not distracted by individuals with behavioral or substance-induced violent behavior. Establishing federal legal penalties for individuals who knowingly and intentionally assault health care workers is an important step in reducing the threat and incidence of violence against emergency physicians and other health care workers and will help ensure a safe environment where we can provide our patients with the high-quality care they need and deserve.

Thank you once again for introducing this important bipartisan legislation and for your leadership on this issue. ACEP is grateful for the opportunity to partner with you in this effort, and our members stand ready to help secure enactment of the SAVE Act into law. Should you have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Ryan McBride, ACEP’s Congressional Affairs Director, at [rmcbride@acep.org](mailto:rmcbride@acep.org).

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Kang, MD, FACEP  
ACEP President

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WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE

901 New York Ave, NW  
Suite 515E  
Washington DC 20001-4432

202-728-0610  
800-320-0610  
[www.acep.org](http://www.acep.org)

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