

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 6542**

**AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 14, 1994**

**Brief Description:** Making the assault of a nurse a crime.

**SPONSORS:** Senators A. Smith, Prentice, Franklin and Winsley

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators A. Smith, Chairman; Ludwig, Vice Chairman; Hargrove, Nelson, Niemi, Quigley, Roach and Spanel.

**Staff:** Susan Mahoney (786-7717)

**Hearing Dates:** February 4, 1994

**BACKGROUND:**

Current law recognizes that some people need greater protection because of their occupation. To deter assaultive behavior against certain types of public oriented officials, if a law enforcement officer or employee, or a fire department employee, or a transit operator is assaulted while performing his or her official duties, the assault is a felony as opposed to a gross misdemeanor.

Nurses and other health care workers are also particularly vulnerable to assaults by others while performing their official duties. It is suggested that health care workers be given added protection under the law to deter assaultive behavior.

**SUMMARY:**

Assault on a nurse or other health care worker while in the performance of his or her official duties is a class C felony.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested February 3, 1994

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Nurses and health care professionals are often intentionally assaulted in the course of their duties. This bill is needed to increase awareness of the problem and to assure health care professionals the protections of the law. Increased penalties are also needed to help deter people from thinking they can assault a health care professional because nothing will happen to them as a result.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Sharon Ness, RN, union representative