

Home » [About ENA](#) » [Press Room](#) » [Press Releases](#) » [Emergency Nurses Association Praises Utah for Increased Workplace Protection](#)

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# Emergency Nurses Association Praises Utah for Increased Workplace Protection

## Penalties increased for acts of violence against emergency medical care providers

**DES PLAINES, Ill. (March 31, 2016)** – Emergency healthcare workers in Utah will have more protection against workplace violence after Gov. Gary Herbert signed a bill today that increases the penalty for assault against healthcare providers or emergency medical workers when the assault causes substantial bodily injury.

The Emergency Nurses Association thanked the bill's sponsor, State Sen. Brian E. Shiozawa, MD, as well as Utah ENA State Council President Emmaline Newman, BSN, RN, CEN, and Utah ENA Government Affairs Chair Teresa Brunt, RN, for their hard work in pushing the bill, S.B. 106, through the legislature. It passed both houses unanimously.

ENA President Kathleen E. Carlson, MSN, RN, CEN, FAEN, noted the growing support among states to protect emergency workers.

"Utah is the thirty-third state to enact laws making it a felony to assault or batter an emergency nurse," Carlson said. "We applaud Utah, and particularly Sen. Shiozawa, for recognizing the serious threat emergency workers face every day."

A 2014 study published in the Journal of Emergency Nursing shows that more than 70 percent of emergency nurses encountered physical or verbal assault by patients or visitors while they were providing care in the emergency setting.

Brunt is one of those who have been attacked. She worked with the state legislature and ENA at the national, state and chapter level for two years to ensure the bill's passage. But her work is not done.

"I will now take this new law and educate nurses in emergency departments within the state of Utah," she said. "Underreporting is a huge problem and emergency department nurses need to understand that assault is not part of their job and definitely not in their scope of practice."

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### About the Emergency Nurses Association

The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) is the premier professional nursing association dedicated to defining the future of emergency nursing through advocacy, education, research, innovation, and leadership. Founded in 1970, ENA has proven to be an indispensable resource to the global emergency nursing community. With more than 41,000 members worldwide, ENA advocates for patient safety, develops industry-leading practice standards and guidelines, and guides emergency healthcare public policy. ENA members have expertise in triage, patient care, disaster preparedness, and all aspects of emergency care. Additional information is available at [www.ena.org](http://www.ena.org)

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