

Maxwell Sennett
Kenduskeag
LD 1761

Hi, my name is Maxwell Sennett and I have been a Mental health worker at Dorothea Dix Psychiatric center for 6 months. I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. During my short time as a Mental health worker, I have been in many physically dangerous and taxing situations including physical restraints and seclusions. Given the nature of psychiatric work it is very unpredictable when these dangerous situations will happen, and they can often catch staff of guard and cause us to get hurt. If I had to estimate the number of times, I have been in either a dangerous situation or a situation where there is significant potential for danger, I would say multiple times a day. I have been kicked, punched, spit on, slapped, elbowed and more. During one of my worst restrains I had to carry an over 250lbs patient 50 feet down a hallway and put the patient in a restraint chair, During the process of this I was punched and had the patient claw the side of my neck around to my throat. causing me to have deep gashes that resembled the being clawed by a bear and because of this I had to seek medical attention. This encounter left me with a high risk of getting an infection, as well as an extremely sore body for over three days. Instances like this happen every day to me and my coworkers and to be honest with you if I wasn't in my early 20's I would have a much harder time doing this job. I know people who have been bitten and broken bones in this line of work. The truth of the matter is that we are dealing with mentally ill and psychotic patients many of whom are on trial for crimes such as assault, robbery, and even murder. We have every bit of the dangers correctional officers have the only difference is that our patients are sick, and we have an obligation to protect them and because of this we are much more limited in how we can respond to dangerous situations. To conclude I would like to say that it isn't safe for us, our coworkers or our patients if we are working past 55 due to the physical requirements of our job as well as, the emotional toll this job can have on our own mental health after 25 years. This is why I am for the proposed legislation.