

I have been employed as a registered nurse at DDPC (Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center) for almost 25 years and I'm in the hopes that LD 1761 will pass. My employment has been rewarding all these years and I care deeply for my patients however during this time frame I have been exposed to things that many people do not have to encounter and yet I have to (at this time) stay for 35 years in order to avoid huge deductions in my retirement before I can leave due to my age. I am 52 years old, I have had my knee totally replaced, my age for retirement to avoid penalty is 62 (losing 6% each year before you reach your retirement age for example if I was to leave 2 years earlier at age 60, I lose 12% off my pension). I've been nursing for approximately 30 years already and at my current place of employment (DDPC) I have been thrown to the floor, punched in the face, kicked, bitten, spit on, choked also exposed to verbal assaults (life threatened, threats to my family etc) during my years here at DDPC, while working 12 hr night shifts and every other weekend. I realize that you can encounter these things in my type of employment but after years of enduring them (as they can happen at any time) there comes a time when you can't keep going and you look forward to a time when you can do something else in your life safely while you still can, being mentally / physically able to so. Our environment of work can be stressful and has caused PTSD for some and we have also lost staff permanently (being injured by patients) while we are trying to provide a safe and therapeutic atmosphere for them to stabilize and go back to their daily lives even though it takes this toll on ours. I feel we should be able to retire just like correctional staff, police officers, fire department etc who fall under shorter working terms and are able to enjoy their retirement without huge costs financially, physically and mentally (we all encounter the same people who need our help). We have an important job to do and the community needs us but staff are getting burned out, we are having trouble retaining staff and keeping staff due to the nature of our job and what we have to encounter. If you have a pension plan/retirement in place that supports staff's overall well being, taking into consideration what I have mentioned by providing an exit plan like LD 1761 then it will be a win/win outcome for everyone giving people the incentive to want to do what we do and know they can still retire in a way that allows you to enjoy it. It will bring people in to a field that scares people to be honest and as you know it is a crucial job we do, please assist us in any way for this to pass, we need this!!!!

Thank you,

Scott Lockhart RN  
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