

STATEMENT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023, OTTAWA, ON – Todd Doherty, Member of Parliament for Cariboo-Prince George and Shadow Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, released the following statement following passage of his Private Member’s Bill C-321, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (assaults against health care professionals and first responders) in the House of Commons at second reading and the failure of the House of reach unanimous consent:

“Today, the Liberal and NDP failed to prioritize the health and safety of first responders and health care workers”.

“On the last day of the parliamentary session, I rose in the House to seek unanimous consent to expedite the passage of Bill C-321 through all stages of the House of Commons. Despite the bill having unanimous support to reach the committee stage, the other parties could not set aside partisan politics for the sake of our heroes”.

“Bill C-321 was born out of the 2019 Health Committee study recommendation. It is not necessary to study this topic again. Every day first responders and healthcare workers experience unprecedented levels of violence in their workplaces; simply for doing their jobs. Instead of sending the clear message to those on the frontlines that parliamentarians value them and that we want to prioritize their safety; the Liberals and NDP played political games”.

“Another study is pointless. We already know the facts. Our first responders and health care heroes are being targeted. We need to take action now”.

“Following this vote, Bill C-321 will now proceed to the committee stage. If passed, Bill C-321 will amend the Criminal Code to consider an assault against a nurse, paramedic, firefighter, or other frontline health care staff an aggravating circumstance during the sentencing of the perpetrator of the assault”.

“Violence should never be a part of the job description. Everyone has the right to a safe and respectful work environment. We need to work together, to ensure all nurses, paramedics, firefighters, and other frontline staff are safe at work.”

“Let’s get this done.”

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Statements of Support/Endorsements

- National Police Federation
- Union of Canadian Correctional Officers
- Canadian Nurses Association
- Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
- Canadian International Association of Fire Fighters Canada
- Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs
- Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia
- Ontario Paramedic Association
- Paramedic Chiefs of Canada
- Association of Manitoba Fire Chiefs
- Saskatoon Paramedic Association
- Northern BC Nurses Union

Quick Facts

- 61% of nurses reported a serious problem with violence over a recent 12-month period and two-thirds considered leaving their jobs as a result.¹
- Nearly half of nurses (46.4%) reported exposure to physical assault 11 or more times.²
- 83.9% of prehospital (paramedic and firefighters) globally have experienced workplace violence³

¹ (The Canadian Federation of Nurses Union)

² (The Canadian Federation of Nurses Union)

³ (Setlack, Brais and Keough)

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- A recent internal survey by Peel region paramedics found 97.5% of medics experienced verbal abuse, 86.1% experienced intimidation, 80% had been physically assaulted, 61.5% experienced sexual harassment and 13.8% were sexually assaulted ⁴

⁴ (Mausz and and Johnston)