

Written Testimony IN SUPPORT of HB 2200

Before the House Federal and State Affairs Committee

Submitted by: Lynette Lewis

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Chairman Barker and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience of workplace bullying with you and why HB 2200 addresses a huge problem that is currently swept under the rug and ignored.

My name is Lynette Lewis, and I am writing this today as a private citizen and a representative of the Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE), and not as a representative of the State of Kansas or any of its agencies and programs.

I would like to tell you how my job was before the workplace bullying began. I was working in a department where I completed adult admissions. The job was very demanding and no two days were ever the same. You had to know the counties that were in our catchment area, legal admission information, inform the Dr. of any medical issues and complete the paperwork when the admission arrived etc... On one occasion, I remember when we had seven admissions arrive at the same time. My job was to see that the paperwork was presented, completed and gathered from each of the seven admissions. Thank goodness this was not an everyday occurrence. I worked in this position for SIX years and loved it. I was complemented on my work by the Drs., nursing staff, social workers, co-workers and my supervisor. During these SIX years, my evaluations were very good and all was well.

The very next morning after my supervisor retired is when I began my five months of hell. My new supervisor walked into my office and informed me I had no idea

what my job was, had no idea how to do my job, would never be capable of ever learning my job and stated she had received a huge amount of complaints about my work. There was no documentation to back up these statements of hers. So the decision was made to move me to the main office of the department which was located in a different building.

I was given a storage closet converted into an office to do my work, of which consisted of scanning old charts into the system. My new supervisor stated she wanted to be able to look out of her office door to see if I was working or wasting time. I requested keys to access the department and was told I wouldn't need keys because someone would be assigned to open the door for me. In the hallway was a white board with employee names written on it to show if they were at work or gone. A co-worker added my name to the bottom of the list but was scolded for doing so. My name was erased from the board and my co-workers were told my name was not to be added. When I took my breaks, I wasn't allowed to sit with the group and my supervisor would set a stop watch to monitor my breaks. Everyone else would usually take a longer break but my supervisor informed me my breaks were twenty minutes and my lunch break was thirty minutes. Not one minute before or one minute after.

I complied and spent my time scanning old charts into the system. Surprise! I couldn't even do that right. I was told I wasn't allowed to talk to anyone because if I was talking it meant I wasn't working and wasting time was not permitted. The bullying, harassment and intimidation was relentless. I was called into a meeting with my supervisor and department head at least once a week but usually two or three times. I was informed my work was horrible, I was wasting time, charts were scanned incorrectly and they weren't sure I would ever be capable of doing this job.

I received a minimum of a ten page feedback per week and I received an unsatisfactory evaluation. This was the first and only negative evaluation I have received in my eighteen years of state service. I had to send an email to my supervisor at the end of each day to account for every single minute of my day. I

was reprimanded for insubordination when I left two minutes of my day unaccounted for. None of my co-workers were treated the way I was.

My mental and physical health suffered. I hated my job. I would cry all the way to work and all the way home and call in sick because I couldn't take any more abuse. I was caring for my aging Father at the time and my health was negatively impacted from the bullying and abuse. This interfered with my ability to care for my Father in the way he deserved to be cared for. That still bothers me to this day because he deserved better.

My co-workers attempted to help me and they were told to stay out of it or they would end up in the same position that I was in. I asked for help from several Management staff but it fell on deaf ears. All of this bullying that I've shared with you is just a drop in the bucket of the abuse I went through.

I was finally transferred into another department and I love my job. I have had nothing but positive results with my new job. This doesn't mean that I have forgotten all of the abuse I received. Are you wondering what happened to the supervisor? Absolutely NOTHING!!!!

Current policies are not adequate to protect the employee from workplace bullying. State employees are sisters, brothers, moms, dads, husbands, wives, nieces and nephews. WE ARE NOT THE ENEMY! We deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. I ask you to put one of your loved ones in my shoes....would you want them to be treated the way I was?

Please help us have dignity and respect at work and support HB 2200.