

# On Agenda

## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

**A6665-B**  
**By Assemblymember Gottfried**

**S4495-A**  
**By Senator Duane**

**AN ACT to amend the public health, education and labor laws regarding health care professional participation in prisoner interrogation and torture.**

On behalf of our 36,000 registered nurse members, the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) strongly supports this legislation and urges its passage this session. NYSNA is the state's oldest and largest organization of registered nurses. Our legislative program places high priority on maintaining the integrity of the nursing profession. We strongly condemn the participation of health care professionals in prisoner abuse, interrogation and torture.

This legislation prohibits all professionals licensed under Title Eight of the Education Law from participating in any kind of prisoner abuse. The bill stipulates that health care professionals may provide appropriate physical and mental health care and treatment that is consistent with generally accepted professional standards. The legislation also requires health care professionals to report any witnessed acts of abuse and torture to proper authorities. Any violation of this legislation is considered professional misconduct under the Education Law.

NYSNA has long advocated for policies that promote patient safety and quality of patient care. Indeed, nurses have an ethical and professional obligation to work to ensure both, in addition to the dignity of all persons within and outside of the traditional health care system. We support this legislation's intent – to protect prisoners, to help ensure proper health care of prisoners and to help protect the professionalism of nursing.

We applaud the sponsors of this legislation for their thoughtful response to the currently high-profile issue of prisoner abuse. NYSNA believes that prisoner abuse of any kind should never be tolerated and that health professionals' participation should be strictly prohibited under all circumstances.

June 8, 2009