

SB439 APRN Compact State Testimony

Thank you Madame Chair and Vice-Chair and all committee members for allowing my testimony today.

My name is Shannon Seifert and I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist residing in Laurel, MD. I served as a Captain in the United States Army Nurse Corps before going to Georgetown University for my Masters degree and currently provide anesthesia care for multiple hospitals and surgicenters throughout Maryland and DC. I am a past president of the Maryland Association of Nurse Anesthetists and today want to endorse SB439 which provides a compact APRN license to Maryland. Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Midwives, Clinical Nurse Specialists and CRNAs can all benefit from this change and in return, provide quality, safe, and cost effective care to Maryland patients.

While serving as the System Chief Anesthetist for a large health system, I managed hundreds of CRNAs across nine hospitals and multiple surgicenters in Maryland and the District of Columbia. When Covid began to impact the region, many providers retired early or left practice entirely leaving my system with many vacancies. We addressed this issue with locums tenens CRNAs, temporary providers coming to Maryland from out of state. Part of the credentialing process required a Maryland state CRNA license but the burden of maintaining licensure for existing providers and juggling this influx of new advanced practice clinicians left the Maryland BON swamped. Licensure was delayed for many, sometimes for months. Meanwhile, critical health services such as emergent surgery all the way to routine endoscopies were at risk for delays or cancellations for lack of providers. During Covid, we established 24/7 airway teams, critical care support staffing and a Covid overflow hospital at the Washington Convention Center in DC. I had to staff this field hospital in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers 24/7. But I could only use providers with a DC license. So a CRNA living 6 miles away in Takoma Park, MD couldn't help staff in DC. This compact APRN agreement facilitates greater portability for providers across state lines and improves communications between states so that providers are always the best and brightest for Maryland patients. This will allow Advanced Practitioners to go where there is greatest need and not be limited by a state border. Regional threats like pandemics will happen again, and Maryland needs to be prepared.

Senators of the Finance Committee, I strongly urge a favorable vote on SB439.

Shannon Seifert, MS, CRNA