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Walter L. Simmons, President

Bill Number:	House Bill 1006
Title:	Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgical Facilities – Surgical Technologists
Committee:	Health and Government Operations
Hearing Date:	March 6, 2024
Position:	UNFAVORABLE

Employ Prince George’s, Inc. (“EPG”) is a nonprofit organization based in Prince George’s County, Maryland. EPG serves as the Administrative and Fiscal Agent of the Prince George’s County Local Workforce Development Board and is responsible for regulating policy development and the administration of workforce activities related to services and programs funded by the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA). Under the leadership of EPG, the Prince George’s County Local Workforce Development Area serves over 30,000 jobseekers and 4,000 businesses annually.

EPG is opposed to House Bill 1006, which aims to prohibit ambulatory surgical centers and hospitals from hiring surgical technologists who have not completed a specified program. EPG is deeply concerned about the potential implications of this bill on our community’s workforce, particularly on the apprenticeship opportunities available for surgical technologists. As an organization committed to connecting jobseekers with training and employment opportunities, we have witnessed firsthand the effectiveness of apprenticeships in preparing individuals for careers in healthcare.

Surgical technologists play a critical role in the operating room, ensuring that surgeries proceed smoothly by assisting surgeons and nurses with instruments, equipment, and other necessary tasks. Currently, apprenticeships serve as a viable pathway for individuals to enter this profession, providing hands-on training and mentorship under the supervision of experienced professionals. These apprenticeships not only offer valuable practical skills but also allow individuals to earn a living while learning, making healthcare careers more accessible to a diverse range of candidates.

House Bill 1006, if enacted, would effectively eliminate apprenticeships as a pathway to becoming a surgical technologist. By mandating completion of a specified program, the bill would restrict entry into the profession to those who have completed formal education, potentially excluding individuals who may not have the means or resources to pursue such programs. This would not only limit opportunities for aspiring surgical technologists but also exacerbate workforce shortages in healthcare facilities, particularly in underserved areas where access to formal education programs may be limited.

By recognizing the value of apprenticeships in workforce development and ensuring that individuals have multiple pathways to enter the profession, we can strengthen our healthcare workforce and better serve our communities. For the foregoing reasons, EPG respectfully urges the Committee to report unfavorably on House Bill 1006, and instead support policies that promote and expand apprenticeship opportunities for surgical technologists.