

March 4, 2026
Oral Testimony

My name is Jacqueline C. Mitchell, and I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist with eighteen years of clinical practice. I come before you in strong opposition to Senate Bill 0951 from several professional perspectives: as a retired Army Colonel, a military CRNA, a Clinical Director, an educator, and a frontline clinician caring for some of Maryland's sickest patients.

Theme: Demographic Incompatibility: Building a Dependent Model on a Retiring Foundation

The Anesthesiologist Assistant (AA) anesthesia care model is fundamentally flawed, and I would like to offer four reasons:

First, it has failed to scale.

AAs were first licensed in 1969, yet there are only about 4,000 practicing in the United States, with nearly half concentrated in just two states; Georgia and Florida. The model has struggled to grow because it is entirely dependent on anesthesiologists for supervision.

Second, Maryland faces a demographic cliff.

Approximately 45.6% of anesthesiologists in Maryland are age 55 or older. It is fundamentally unsound policy to build a new workforce that is legally dependent on a provider group that is approaching retirement.

Third, it is an economic dead end.

This legislation diverts attention and resources from a workforce that already exists and is expanding; Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists. Nearly six decades and the AA model has still failed to meaningfully scale nationwide.

Fourth, it provides no solution for rural Maryland.

Because AAs must be tethered to an anesthesiologist, they cannot practice in rural critical access hospitals, where independent CRNAs often serve as the sole anesthesia providers.

In closing, Maryland already has the gold standard of anesthesia care. CRNAs are filling the need today and will continue to do so through our educational programs and our independent practice model.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **oppose Senate Bill 0951**.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline C. Mitchell

Jacqueline C. Mitchell, PhD, CRNA, FAANA