

11 Bladen Street
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

3/2/2026

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes and Members of the Senate,

My name is James Patrick Flaherty, and I am a Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA) with 18 years of experience in safe anesthesia practice. As a resident of Anne Arundel County for nearly two decades, I am writing to you today to express my strong and confident support for **SB0951 (State Board of Physicians—Anesthesiologist Assistants—Licensing)**.

Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of serving in high level leadership roles, including as Chief Anesthetist for multiple groups. In these positions, I have led teams of both CAAs and CRNAs, and I have sat on national leadership councils for some of the largest healthcare staffing companies in the country.

I have seen firsthand how the Anesthesia Care Team model (where physician anesthesiologists and anesthetists work together) provides the highest standard of safety and efficiency for patients.

A Proven Record of Safe, Diverse Care

My 18 year career in the District of Columbia has been defined by an unblemished record of safety across diverse clinical settings, ranging from high pressure Level I Trauma Centers to University teaching hospitals.

I have had the privilege of providing anesthesia for a vast spectrum of the human experience, caring for everyone from homeless patients to those living in million dollar homes and from vulnerable newborns to centenarians.

My clinical expertise spans the management of critically ill ICU patients and healthy elite athletes alike, treating every individual, whether an anonymous citizen or a high profile celebrity, with the same high standard of professionalism and care.

Perhaps the greatest testament to the quality and safety of my practice is that I am frequently personally requested by my own colleagues to provide anesthesia for their own family members.

I am eager to bring this same level of dedicated, safe care home to my neighbors and friends in Maryland.

Why SB0951 Matters for Maryland

Currently, I commute from my home in Annapolis to hospitals in Washington, D.C., to provide care. While I am proud of the work I do, it is a missed opportunity for our state that I cannot practice my profession in my own community. Supporting SB0951 is a vital step toward:

- **Improving Access to Care:** Marylanders deserve timely access to high quality surgical care. By licensing CAAs, Maryland can expand its healthcare workforce and reduce delays in the OR.
- **Retaining Local Talent:** There are many highly skilled professionals like myself living in Maryland who are forced to take their expertise across state lines. SB0951 allows us to stay and serve our own neighbors.
- **Strengthening the Care Team:** CAAs are highly trained at the master's level to work specifically within the Anesthesia Care Team model, ensuring a collaborative and safe environment for every patient.

Clarity on the Scope of SB0951

It is equally important to clarify what this legislation does not do. SB0951 is designed to support the existing healthcare infrastructure, not disrupt it:

- **No Independent Practice:** This bill does not create independent practice for CAAs; we will continue to work exclusively under the supervision of physician anesthesiologists.
- **Complementary to the Team:** It does not replace our anesthesia professional colleagues; instead, it adds another highly skilled, supervised clinician to the care team to meet increasing patient demand.
- **Institutional Autonomy:** It does not mandate changes to existing practice authority or hospital bylaws; individual facilities will maintain the right to decide their own staffing models within the framework of the law.

A Personal Perspective

On a personal note, this bill would be life changing for my family. My wife has been a dedicated teacher in Anne Arundel County Public School System for years and currently teaches at SOTI. We are raising our three daughters here; one is already at St. Mary's in Annapolis, with her sisters soon to follow.

Right now, my days are often consumed by the long commute around the Beltway, which regularly takes me over an hour each way. Passing SB0951 would mean that instead of spending hours in traffic, I could be practicing just 15 minutes down the road.

It would allow me to be more present for my daughters' school and sporting events and, most importantly, actually make it home in time for dinner with my family.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our district. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you or your staff.

Sincerely,

J. Patrick Flaherty, CAA

3/2/2026