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RE: SUPPORT for **HB 1558 / SB 951** – State Board of Physicians –
Anesthesiologist Assistants – Licensing

The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, House Health and
Government Operations Committee

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Dear Chairs Peña-Melnyk and Beidle, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Sheby Thomas. I have been a Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA) for nine years, and I am a proud resident of the Crown subdivision in Gaithersburg. I am writing to you today with a sense of urgency and deep conviction to ask for your favorable report on **HB 1558** and **SB 951**.

For nearly a decade, I have dedicated my career to keeping patients safe during their most vulnerable moments. Yet, every single morning, I am forced to drive past Maryland hospitals (facilities in my own backyard that are struggling with critical anesthesia staffing shortages) to practice in Washington, D.C. It is disheartening to live in a state that experiences a "brain drain" of its own healthcare professionals simply because we lack a common-sense licensure pathway.

I want to bring my expertise skills, not limited to, home. I have spent nearly a decade mastering the complexities of anesthesia. My clinical experience is not just broad; it is specialized in the areas Maryland needs most. I provide critical care for pediatric and NICU patients, and I am skilled in OB, orthopedics, spine, and ENT procedures.

Let me be clear: my profession is built on the foundation of the Anesthesia Care Team (ACT). We do not seek, nor do we want, independent practice. We believe in physician-led care because it is the gold standard for patient safety. By law and by passion, I work under the direct supervision of physician anesthesiologists. This model ensures that while I am at the bedside providing continuous care, a physician is always there for complex decision-making. This isn't just a workflow; it's a safety net for every Marylander who goes under anesthesia.

Maryland's healthcare system is under immense pressure. We see the headlines: surgeries are delayed, procedural centers are strained, and patients are waiting longer for life-saving or life-improving care. By licensing CAAs, Maryland can:

- **Stop the Talent Flight:** Stop forcing Maryland residents like me to take our expertise to D.C. or Virginia.
- **Expand Surgical Capacity:** We are ready-made, highly trained clinicians who can immediately plug into existing hospital teams to get more patients into the OR safely and efficiently.
- **Ensure Accountability:** This bill brings us under the direct oversight of the State Board of Physicians, providing the transparent regulation and public protection that our citizens deserve.

This legislation doesn't replace anyone, and it doesn't change how medicine is practiced; it simply removes a barrier to entry for a supervised workforce that is already helping solve the national anesthesia crisis.

I live in the heart of District 17. I see the growth in our community, and I see the need for robust healthcare. I am asking for the opportunity to serve the patients in my own neighborhood. Please support **HB 1558** and **SB 951** and help us keep Maryland's best clinicians right here at home.

Sincerely,

Sheby Thomas, CAA

Resident, District 17