

Senate Finance Committee

11 Bladen Street

3 East Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

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

My name is Catherine Bakir, and I am a proud Maryland resident and a licensed Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA). I have been licensed and practicing as a CAA for 7 years, caring for patients across Maryland during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives — before surgery, during complex procedures, and throughout recovery.

Every day, I meet patients who are anxious, in pain, or facing life-changing diagnoses. I have cared for children undergoing emergency procedures, elderly patients requiring urgent surgeries, and working parents who simply want to get back home safely to their families. As part of a physician-led anesthesia care team, I work under the direct supervision of an anesthesiologist to ensure that each patient receives safe, high-quality anesthesia care. That collaborative model is not only effective — it is essential to patient safety.

Despite the growing demand for surgical and procedural services, Maryland does not currently license CAAs. Meanwhile, 23 states — including the District of Columbia and Virginia — recognize and license CAAs as part of the anesthesia care team. I see firsthand how this model increases access to care, strengthens physician-led teams, and helps address workforce shortages without compromising safety or quality.

Senate Bill 951 / House Bill 1558 — State Board of Physicians — Anesthesiologist Assistants — Licensing — represents an opportunity for Maryland to modernize its workforce policies and better serve patients. This legislation does not expand independent practice; it maintains direct physician supervision while allowing CAAs to practice within a regulated, licensed framework under the State Board of Physicians.

As someone who has dedicated my education, training, and career to safe anesthesia practice, I want Maryland patients to have every resource available to ensure timely access to surgical care. I want our hospitals to have the workforce support they need. And I want our state to remain competitive with neighboring jurisdictions that already benefit from this proven model.

I respectfully urge you to support Senate Bill 951 / House Bill 1558 and help strengthen access to safe, physician-led anesthesia care in Maryland.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state.

Sincerely,

Catherine Bakir, MSA

Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant

Maryland Resident