

**March 16, 2026**  
**Oral Testimony**

My name is Jacqueline C. Mitchell, and I have served as a nurse for forty years, including eighteen years as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 1558. My position is grounded in extensive professional experience as a retired Army Colonel, military CRNA, Clinical Director, educator, and frontline clinician who has cared for some of Maryland's most critically ill patients.

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. After nearly six decades, the AA model has still failed to scale meaningfully 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 meeting the need today and will continue to do so through our educational programs and independent practice model.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **oppose House Bill 1558**.

Sincerely,

*Jacqueline C. Mitchell*

Jacqueline C. Mitchell, PhD, CRNA, FAANA