

House Health Committee  
6 Bladen Street  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

3/16/2026

Dear Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the House,

My name is 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 **HB1558**.

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 anesthesiologists 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 provided anesthesia for a vast spectrum of the human experience, caring for everyone from vulnerable newborns to centenarians. Perhaps the greatest testament to the quality of my practice is that I am 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 in Maryland.

### **Why HB1558 Matters for Maryland**

Currently, I commute from my home to hospitals in Washington, D.C., to provide care. This is a missed opportunity for our state. Supporting HB1558 is a vital step toward:

- **Improving Access to Care:** Marylanders deserve timely access to high quality surgical care. Licensing CAAs allows Maryland to expand its healthcare workforce and reduce delays.
- **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.
- **Economic Efficiency for Hospitals:** Many Maryland hospitals are currently forced to rely on expensive locum tenens and travel staff to fill coverage gaps. HB1558 would

allow hospitals to hire long term, full time CAAs from our own local community. This is a far more stable and fiscally responsible solution for our state's healthcare systems than relying on high cost temporary staffing.

## Clarity on the Scope of the Legislation

HB1558 is designed to support the existing healthcare infrastructure, not disrupt it. It is important to note:

- **No Independent Practice:** This bill does not create independent practice; we work exclusively under the supervision of physician anesthesiologists.
- **Complementary to the Team:** It does not replace other anesthesia professionals; it adds another highly skilled clinician to the team to meet increasing demand.
- **Institutional Autonomy:** It does not mandate changes to hospital bylaws; facilities maintain the right to decide their own staffing models.

## 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 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 a long commute around the Beltway, which regularly takes me over an hour each way. Passing HB1558 would mean that instead of spending those valuable 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.

I am also fully prepared to pay the **required licensing fees** in full recommended by the Board of Physicians. When I calculate the trade-off, the cost of a license is a minor investment compared to the "time is money" reality of my current commute. The financial cost of travel and the far higher price of lost time make this a trade I am more than willing to make.

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  
3/16/2026