

TESTIMONY OF JOHN STILLINGS, CAA
HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
PROPONENT REGARDING HB 2295
FEBRUARY 18, 2019

The Honorable Brenda Landwehr
Kansas House of Representatives

Dear Representative Landwehr:

As a Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA) and Kansas native, House Bill 2295, the Anesthesiologist Assistant Licensure Act, is of great importance to me. I went to Topeka West High School and earned my bachelor's from the University of Kansas. In 2013 I moved to Houston to pursue my passion and earn my Master of Science in Anesthesia. Upon graduation I took a job in the Tampa area and have been practicing here ever since.

It saddens me that I cannot work in what I still consider my home state of Kansas. My family all still live in Kansas and I miss being home. I pursued this career with the hope that I could return home and practice near where I grew up.

CAA's earn a substantial income and I want my tax dollars go to the state that developed me. CAA's would help fulfill the needs of under-served parts of the state. Kansas is bordered by two CAA schools - the University of Colorado to the west and UMKC to the east. I have no doubt many of those graduates would prefer to practice in Kansas as well.

Regarding the ability of CAA's to safely administer anesthesia I would first refer you to an article from the peer-reviewed publication "Anesthesia" titled "Anesthesia Care Team Composition and Surgical Outcomes." It compared outcomes of over four hundred thousand elderly hospital patients who underwent anesthesia and found no significant difference in mortality between anesthesiologist-supervised nurse anesthetists and CAA's.

Every day the lives of elderly, frail and complex patients are quite literally placed in my hands. The excellent training I received as a AA student prepared me well for this responsibility. Student AA's are always with a preceptor in the operating room. What I've observed while working at a teaching hospital is that this is typically not the case for student registered nurse anesthetists or anesthesiology residents. These trainees are too often treated as free labor and left alone during procedures to fill in for an absent licensed anesthesia provider. Aside from being unfair to the patient, this practice robs the anesthesia trainee of valuable one-on-one learning with an experienced provider.

I see CAA's as a type of physician assistant (PA), and in a way we are. While PA schools must prepare their students to enter into dozens of specialties, AA schools focus entirely on anesthesia. Medicine is becoming more and more specialized and CAA's could be an excellent addition to the anesthesia workforce serving the citizens of Kansas.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my viewpoint. I hope that you vote in favor of HB 2295 to allow CAA's such as myself to work in the great state of Kansas.

Sincerely,
John Stillings, CAA