

David M Conger, MD
PROPONENT TESTIMONY – Sub. S.B. 301
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services & Medicaid Committee

Good afternoon Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares, and Members of the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee.

My name is David M. Conger, and I am a board-certified anesthesiologist currently practicing in Geneva, Ohio. I have been practicing in Ohio since 1992. I am here today to express my support for Sub. S.B. 301: the bill to clarify Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) scope of practice.

I have had the opportunity to work with CRNAs for many years at Geneva Medical Center. I respect the quality of their work and the excellent care they provide to my patients in the perioperative period. This begins with preoperative evaluation and preparation and continues with intraoperative care. This care is finished after safe discharge from the postoperative period. I have personally observed CRNAs doing all these various duties over the years and can testify to their skill and capability in performing them. I can also attest to their ability to collaborate with all members of the surgical team.

CRNA education and training is rigorous and extensive. The requirements for admission to anesthesia school are considerable. This includes a baccalaureate degree in nursing, and significant experience in a critical care setting prior to attendance at an accredited anesthesia school. Anesthesia school is long and rigorous: between 2 and 3 years of extensive scientific and clinical training including comprehensive pharmacological education. After graduation, and upon obtaining currently a Masters degree or Doctorate degree, they must pass a certification examination administered by the National Board of Certification for Nurse Anesthetists and then maintain that certification on a regular basis.

The bill further defines the current scope of Nurse Anesthetist practice in Ohio: this is appropriate and proper. The ability to write orders and delegate duties to other licensed health care professionals in the surgical setting is a logical application of their comprehensive education and training. The language of the bill is very focused. It applies to the anesthesia care a CRNA performs in the perianesthesia period (before, during and after a surgery) and when performing clinical functions. This is the area of CRNA expertise. The bill is very clear in that it maintains physician supervision of CRNAs. I believe this bill will improve surgical care in Ohio and unconditionally support it.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer questions.