

Dear Honorable Ohio Representative,

As a Surgical Assistant–Certified (SA-C) and a proud member of the American Board of Surgical Assistants (ABSA), I'm reaching out on behalf of myself and many others who work daily in operating rooms across Ohio. I am the Co-Founder and Program Director of the only surgical assistant training program in Ohio, and I'm respectfully asking that the American Board of Surgical Assistants be named in Sections 3702.3013, 3727.26, 4787.01, 4787.07, and 4787.10 of HB423.

More than 4,000 surgical assistants nationwide hold active ABSA certifications—including 120 of us working here in Ohio. Since the ABSA was founded in 1987, more than 10,000 surgical assistants from around the country have earned this credential, and 240 of us have worked or are working in Ohio hospitals and surgery centers.

Founded by Dr. Paul F. Weeks, MD, PhD, in 1987 to bring national standards to our profession, the ABSA runs a rigorous, comprehensive certification exam covering everything from surgical anatomy and operative technique to perioperative care, diagnostics, safety standards, and patient emergencies. The depth and scope of this exam hold us to a high bar—one that matches the seriousness of our role in every procedure.

Our job is to assist the surgeon—not to replace, diagnose, or act independently. Everyone certified by the ABSA knows this. Holding the SA-C credential simply means we've shown the knowledge and practical skills needed to support surgeons safely and effectively. Nowhere in the country does an ABSA certification let us act on our own.

Continuous learning and professional accountability are at the core of ABSA certification. Every two years, we're required to recertify, which means documenting at least 400 actual surgical cases or 1,500 clinical hours, plus completing ongoing education and maintaining up-to-date credentials in CPR, BLS, ACLS, or PALS. As far as I know, the ABSA is the only certifying body for surgical assistants that asks us to actually prove our clinical experience for every recertification—a safeguard, I believe, is absolutely vital for patient safety.

The ABSA is currently completing the application process for NCCA accreditation, which would bring even greater recognition of our standards. To my knowledge, among organizations referenced in similar laws, at least one is neither accredited nor working toward accreditation. Yet in the eight states where a true license for surgical assistants exists, ABSA's credential is accepted in the vast majority—including Texas, Illinois, Colorado, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C.

Thank you for considering this request for the sake of patient safety, and for your ongoing work to support excellent surgical care in Ohio. From firsthand experience, I know how

crucial it is for Ohio's surgical assistants—and our patients—that the American Board of Surgical Assistants be included in HB423.

Respectfully,

*Crystal Warner*

Crystal Warner, SA-C, CSA, CST, FAST