

**Ohio House of Representatives Health Committee
House Bill 196 Proponent Testimony (2-15-22)
Sarah Bartlett, Board-Certified Obstetrician Gynecologist**

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee, my name is Sarah Bartlett, and I am a Board-Certified Obstetrician Gynecologist. I specialize in the care of women outside of pregnancy and perform a significant number of surgeries both routine (dilation and curettage) as well as complex (Robotic hysterectomy), and everything in between. I attended medical school at the University of Louisville, and completed ObGyn residency training at University of Cincinnati. I am the former president of the Cincinnati ObGyn Society and an active member in the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. I have been a proud member of the Cincinnati medical community since training, and I continue to advance women's healthcare while employed by the Christ Hospital.

I will echo the words of my colleagues in asserting that the role of experienced surgical assistants in the OR is integral to my success as a surgeon. They are an invaluable member of the surgical team. I rely heavily on their skilled and experienced help in nearly every case. When my usual trained assistants are unavailable, their absence is noted throughout the patient care encounter. It is anxiety-provoking to be unfamiliar with a new assistant or someone filling in, not knowing the extent of their competency. The SA (surgical assistant) helps to prepare the patient, position her, prepare all necessary equipment, and make sure it is available and working properly. They know the details of each procedure and can anticipate my next surgical steps and what assistance I will need. I frequently ask for their opinion during difficult cases. I am relieved and reassured to see my reliably excellent help when I arrive to perform surgery. The experience of the Surgical Assistant can make or break a case.

In light of this, I fully support licensure of surgical assistants through the State Medical Board. I suspect many of my surgeon colleagues are unaware that not all assistants are appropriately educated, trained, or licensed, and I imagine this would cause great concern. Implementing licensure through the State Medical Board would help ensure that surgeons, and more importantly patients, have the best available team working in Ohio's ORs.

Thanks for the opportunity to share my thoughts. I am available to offer any additional information if necessary.

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