

Submitter: Mona Bourbonnais
On Behalf Of: Association of Surgical Technologists
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: HB4106

Dear Senate members,

I am a native of Oregon and I am writing to you as a Certified Surgical Technologist who has been practicing and educating surgical technologists in Idaho for over 30 years. I am also a past member of the Education and Professional Standards Committee of the Association of Surgical Technologists. I strongly oppose the amendment to HB4106 which would allow on the job trained surgical technologists to practice in your state. Certified Surgical Technologists are highly trained surgical professionals who are required to obtain an AAS or AS degree, we are educated in either community colleges or universities. Our education includes intense training in sterile technique, anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology, surgical skills training and procedures in over 14 specialty areas of surgery. We are required to have over 120 surgical procedures in a variety of surgical specialties to be eligible for graduation and to be eligible for the national certification exam administered by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting. We are required to maintain this certification to keep up with current technology and procedures by earning 30 CEU every two years or retesting every two years.

On the job trained "surgical technicians" will not be eligible for this certification. The wording on the bill states "Allows person employed by health care facility to practice surgical technology if person has completed and is certified specified apprenticeship program" There IS no such program, therefore there is no certification.

Certified Surgical Technologists are the ONLY profession that is trained specifically in creating and maintaining the sterile field, instrumentation and equipment in the operating room, as well as anticipating the surgeon's needs. Surgeons rely on our expertise to insure that their patients are protected and the procedures go well with minimal adverse outcomes. It is irresponsible to pass a bill that would put unknowing patients in the State of Oregon in danger. Surgical site infections nationally (SSIs) account for over 2 billion dollars in health care costs annually. SSIs are responsible for longer hospital stays, subsequent surgeries, and many times devastating consequences and outcomes for patients. Wrong site surgery and retained surgical items are also a huge drain on our already taxed healthcare system. I understand that the current climate of health care has led hospitals to look for alternatives. Allowing poorly trained hospital workers, who have not received the requisite education, to function in a profession that has long been the patients advocate is not the answer. Would you feel comfortable with a surgeon or an anesthesia provider that did not receive a fully accredited education performing

surgery on you or a family member? This is no different. Every patient deserves a Certified Surgical Technologist as a member of their surgical team, every member of the team has a specific role and there should be no short cuts. I urge you to vote no on this bill and be an advocate for the citizens of your state.

Mona Bourbonnais, CST, M.S.
Fellow-Association of Surgical Technologists