

Submitter: Libby McRae
On Behalf Of: Surgical Patients in Oregon
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: HB4106

Dear Senate Committee Members,

I strongly urge you to vote "NO" on HB4106. The fact is that this measure will increase risk to surgical patients in Oregon. I am a Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) and have served surgical patients for 30 years. I received my initial training in the U.S. Army, and have worked in Washington State as a surgical technologist and surgical technology educator for many years. I serve my patients in many capacities: at the mayo stand right next to the surgeons I work with, at the Yakima Valley College, teaching the future CST's how to best serve their patients, as a national member of the Education and Standards of Practice Committee member and chair, as a Chair of the Core Curriculum for Surgical Technology, 7th edition Panel, and currently as Treasurer of the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA). I believe the ways in which I serve my patients has given me a perspective that is worth providing.

The public is not widely aware of what the surgical technologist does in the operating room. I believe the public is under the impression that we are constantly under the watchful eye of the surgeon and circulating nurse. On the contrary, our esteemed colleagues, the surgeons and nurses, are our team members. They rely on us to work within our knowledge base: asepsis and sterile technique, preparation and maintenance of the sterile field during EVERY operation, anatomy and physiology so that we can anticipate what comes next, instrumentation and technology, so that we may operate and troubleshoot any instruments or equipment we work with, and many other areas of expertise with which we work. Graduates from our programs are required to have this knowledge base and have proven effective in their skills in a laboratory setting PRIOR to having their hands in or on a patient; the patient who may be any of your daughters, mothers, uncles or friends. With a foundational knowledge and skills practice, the newly educated surgical technologists are required to prove their skills in the operating room, under the supervision of a preceptor, prior to graduating and seeking employment. All of this minimizes risk and provides our communities with safe and effective healthcare practitioners.

A CST is also required to maintain their knowledge base by continuing education to keep up their certification. Allowing an "on-the-job" trained technician to work in this arena is not only a step back for this profession, it is something that healthcare facilities should NOT want as it is a risk factor they're passing onto their patients.

Risk factors include surgical site infections, wrong medications, and many other adverse outcomes that surgical technologists educated properly prevent.

I implore you to speak on behalf of your patients. This is not a profession that should be trained on the job. This profession has grown since its inception and has made great strides at providing safe care for patients. We value our history and the work we

do alongside our amazing nurses and surgeons.

There are other avenues to help our communities get the professionals they need! Confluence Health in Washington State has done amazing things to get the surgical technologists they needed! Check in with them to find out the scholarship system they put into place, and partnership they developed with a surgical technology program in WA. There are innovative ways to provide the necessary practitioners to the places that need them, without compromising safe patient care.

Thank you for your time,

Libby McRae, CST, Fellow-AST

Treasurer, NBSTSA