

Senate Healthcare Committee
900 Court St., NE,
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: HB 4106, allows a person employed by a health care facility to practice surgical technology if person enrolled in or has completed specified apprenticeship program

Chair Holvey, Members of the Committee, for the record, my name is Don Dreese and I am a surgical technologist urging your opposition to HB 4106.

According to the Bureau Labor Statistics, there are 1,300 surgical technologists in the state of Oregon. Surgical Technologists are important members of the surgical team and are playing a critical role during the COVID19 pandemic. We have primary responsibility for maintaining the sterile surgical field and ensuring that members of the surgical team adhere to aseptic and sterile technique. During the COVID19 pandemic, surgical technologists have been utilized to train other hospital healthcare providers in those patient care procedures.

Surgical technologists are allied health professionals who work under the direct supervision of a surgeon. We serve as the surgeon's co-pilot, and among our many functions, we provide instruments and supplies to the surgeon during a surgery and must constantly anticipate the surgeon's needs. We have to think many steps ahead, because every minute a patient is in surgery increases the risks related to anesthesia and bleeding. Also, we operate complex surgical equipment, such as robots, we handle specimens, such as kidney stones and biopsy tissue; and, most importantly, we execute very precise actions — known as "sterile technique" — in order to keep the immediate surgical area sterile.

A truly competent surgical technologist must have a working knowledge of human anatomy, surgical procedures, and numerous instrumentation and technologies in order to assist the surgeon's performance of invasive procedures.

Surgical technologists play a vital role in patient safety. Currently, we have to go through a two-year education program which includes both core coursework and be certified by a national certification body with known standards to reach certification. This legislation would allow for an apprenticeship program in lieu of an education program. There simply is not enough information available about the type of education a person would need in order to begin working as an apprentice in this type of program. We believe the education program that exists for surg techs is an important part of preparing a person to enter this field, and would urge you to oppose HB 4106.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Don Dreese