

Submitter: Kym Peterson
On Behalf Of: Dental assistants and their patients
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: HB3223

Dear Chair Patterson and members of the Senate Health Care Committee,

Please oppose HB 3223. As a dental assistant of 35 years and a dental assisting instructor for 18 years, our students are proud of the knowledge and skill they gain through our rigorous classes, clinics and labs. They do not find the Boards difficult to pass which is easily seen by our pass rates provided by DANB. Typically 95-100% of our students pass all of their Board exams every year. This is due to our program that develops skilled and knowledgeable critical thinkers who have the appropriate foundational information to pass their Boards and succeed in their field.

I am concerned that the representatives writing these Bills (2996 & 3223) are unable to train their assistants to a foundational level necessary to pass their Boards. So instead of improving their training methods they are removing the exams that test foundational health, safety, critical thinking and skill levels.

In 2013, an oral surgeon in Oklahoma, who was responsible for training his own dental assistants exposed over 7000 patients to HIV, AIDS, HepB & C due to his sterilization protocols. At that time Oklahoma had no Infection Control exams or many other certification exams required of their Dental Assistants. So dentists trained their own Assistants. The Oral Surgeon in this case felt that the lack of sterilization oversight was due to his dental assistants not following protocols. In the end it was found to be the dentist at fault. Leaving dentists to train their assistants on inflectional control, ionizing radiation exposure, medical emergencies, dental materials will lead to under-educated dental assistants who unknowingly expose their patients to harm. Dentist do not have the time to oversee their Assistants to this degree. It is an inefficient business model and will render health care providing dental assistants without basic knowledge to keep themselves and their patients safe.

Please vote no on HB3223