

Chairman Mustio, Chairman Readshaw and members of the committee, I find it an honor and a privilege to speak with you this morning with regards to **House Bill 1805**.

My name is Jennifer Peterson and I have been a Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) for 25 years. I began my journey in the United States Navy as a Certified Surgical Technologist and climbed up the ranks of the civilian healthcare arena to become the Administrative Director for Western Pennsylvania Surgery Center in Wexford, PA. We are a free-standing Ambulatory Surgical Center (ASC) that is privately-owned and physician-owned.

As Administrative Director, I conduct the interviewing process for potential candidates to be employed at our facility. I find this opportunity to be rewarding yet at times challenging since the decisions I make, in the staff I select to hire, will have a direct impact on the surgical outcomes of our patients. Most of the healthcare professionals who become employed at our facility, present credentials via the means of registration or a license that is required for them to practice their profession. However, surgical technologists in the State of Pennsylvania are not required to obtain any credentials. Yet, these integral members of the surgical team also known as “the scrub”; the keeper of the surgical tools; the guardians of the sterile field; and the maintainers of aseptic technique - are expected to be knowledgeable of hundreds of surgical procedures and instrumentation. Their goal is to be able to anticipate the next move of the surgeon to ensure that the surgical procedures run safely and efficiently. In my personal and administrative experience, I find that surgical technologists educated through an accredited program and who have sat for and successfully passed the CST certification exam, provide a broader base of knowledge and understanding of surgical procedures, sterile technique and most importantly, the **standards and procedures that govern patient safety**. Additionally, CSTs are employees who are always learning through continuing education, as this is required for the renewal of their certification.

I am also responsible for the annual budget of my facility and, despite the expense, we invest in making sure our surgical technologists are certified because we know it ensures that we are providing the utmost quality of surgical care to the patient community of the Commonwealth.

Now more than ever, the increase in the number of patients paying out of pocket for their healthcare expenses has increased exponentially. I see this on a daily basis; patients coming in for surgery having high deductible insurance plans. Their out-of-pocket coinsurance and copayments have soared in the past few years. Patients are becoming more educated about their healthcare and healthcare plans because maintaining their physical health is costing them more financially. Our patients need to know they are receiving the best care because after all.... they are paying for it.

Requiring healthcare facilities to hire certified surgical technologists supports patient safety. We take great pride in the surgical technologists who are certified in our facility. We also support our non-certified techs in getting their certification and our surgeons encourage them to continue to educate themselves. We want our patients to know that our healthcare staff is competent and have the credentials to prove that they are. If we fall short by not supporting the education or certification of surgical technologists, we fall short of quality.

April 11, 2018

HOUSE BILL 1805

Jennifer Peterson, CST - Proponent Speaker

Again, Chairman Mustio, Chairman Readshaw and members of the committee it has been a pleasure speaking here today. Please **support HB1805** and the positive impact it will bring to the healthcare community as well as the patients it serves.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Peterson CST, FAST
Certified Surgical Technologist
Fellow of the Association of Surgical Technology