

House Commerce, Economic Development & Labor Committee
Regarding 2020 House Bill 2506
February 13, 2020

NEUTURAL

Mr. Chairman and members:

My name is Ty Townsend and I am a Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant with 19 years of experience, 14 years as a Kansas resident. I spent 4 years active duty enlisted with the United States Navy, 4 years Navy reserve enlisted and 6 years as an Environmental Science Officer with the US Army Reserve.

I appreciate that Kansas has already taken steps to make it easier for veterans and their spouses with professional credentials and licenses in other states to relocate to Kansas. This was a good idea for veterans like me and I think expanding the concept to non-veterans is also beneficial for Kansas as well as other professionals who wish to live in our great state.

As noted, I am a licensed Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA) in Missouri but live in Kansas. Sixteen other states license my profession. I work as part of the Anesthesiology Care Team at St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri, providing the anesthetic needs of patients during complex surgeries including brain, heart, lung, kidney transplants and traumas as well as the more routine procedures many hospitals provide. It is a very meaningful and rewarding career.

Like many of my AA colleagues in the Kansas City area as well as other states, I would like to work in the state where I live. Some of my professional friends grew up in Kansas. Some have family in Kansas. Some desire to return to their home state. Unfortunately, our state licensure laws forbid us from working here. Three of the four states surrounding Kansas recognize my professional health care license. Kansas does not. I'm fortunate in that I can work in Missouri and live in the Sunflower state. Not so for my colleagues in Oklahoma City, Denver and elsewhere who would like to return home to Salina, Wichita and Topeka, to name a few locations.

For the last couple of years the Kansas Society of Anesthesiologist and the Kansas Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants have been asking the state to create licensure for AA's so they can help reduce the anesthesia provider shortage in our urban areas. The Kansas Department of Health & Environment has recommended that CAA's be licensed here. Unfortunately, licensure has been blocked by a competing, already Kansas licensed, anesthesia provider group. We will continue our efforts to encourage the legislature to license CAA's but we need the legislature to take notice of the issue and act.

I appear as a neutral conferee today because HB 2506 does not help my situation or that of my out of state colleagues. This bill is, however, a very clear recognition that professional licensing barriers prevent quality professionals from coming to the great state of Kansas. They prevent well educated and dedicated veterans and non veterans alike from bringing their families to the state they would like to call home. These professional licensing barriers literally prevent more people coming to Kansas to work, raise families, pay taxes and contribute to their communities. As such, licensing laws can clearly be a burden to our economic future.

I congratulate you on the wisdom to enact the existing law for veterans and their spouses and for the wisdom to expand this concept to others who wish to make Kansas a great place to live and work. I hope you will pass H 2506 and someday consider the other barriers to growth created by our state licensing laws. Thank you.