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Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

I strongly urge you to support HB 2368, a sensible bill providing for the licensure of anesthesiologist assistants in Kansas. CAAs have been an instrumental part of the anesthesia workforce in Missouri for over 20 years, and Kansas would be well-served by these strong practitioners. I am an anesthesiologist in Saint Luke's Health System and serve as Medical Director of the UMKC Anesthesiologist Assistant Program. I have had the privilege of medically directing as well as teaching CAAs and CAA students both in Washington D.C. and in Kansas City, MO.

CAAs are methodical learners and critical thinkers. They are exposed to the operating room and its many unpredictabilities very early in their training. The combination of rigorous science didactics, modeling of adverse scenarios in simulation labs, advanced life support training, and over 2,000 hours of patient contact over the course of their Master's program creates safe, quality, professional anesthesia providers.

I practice with a large cohort of both CAAs and CRNAs on a daily basis. They have identical scope of practice and salaries, and all function interchangeably and cohesively. I do not take much stock in the acronym behind each anesthetist's name when assigning OR cases for the next day, as both sets of providers are well-qualified and equipped to handle what comes their way, which frequently enough is acutely ill patients.

Kansas would be well-served by allowing for licensure of these important providers, as three surrounding states already do. It does not make sense to continue to limit their geographic ability to vigilantly serve our regional patient population.