

Dear Madame Chair and members of the Committee:

My name is Natasha Smith, I live in Wichita, KS, and work as practicing **Certified Surgical Technologist (CST)** at *Wesley Medical Center* in Wichita. I serve as Secretary for the Kansas State Assembly of the Association of Surgical Technologists. Also, I am the current board Chair of the *Industry Advocacy Team* for Wichita Area Technical College. I have been a practicing CST for 9 years.

On behalf of my fellow practicing Certified Surgical Technologists in Kansas, I am here in favor of Senate Bill No. 338 requiring all Surgical Technologist to receive and maintain certification to practice within the State of Kansas.

As a Certified Surgical Technologist, I take great pride in living by the AST motto "*Aeger Primo*": Patient First. With that being said, my surgical journey began in an entry level position, within the operating room. I was trained on the job. I could open sterile supplies and don sterile attire to assist with surgery when needed but I still did not have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a higher level of surgical care. I watched so many of our patients come into the operating room, nervous and scared, with an underlying thought all members of the team were operating under the highest form of education. However, this was not the case, and I became determined to get my certification.

An accredited Surgical Technology program provides a strong foundation of fundamental building blocks and creates a well-rounded surgical technologist who is prepared to be certified and who strives to always put the patient first. Requiring certification holds Certified Surgical Technologists to a higher level of accountability not only to the patient but to our surgical peers as well. Continuing education means keeping up with the ever-changing world of surgical technology. Through gaining my CST certification, and continuing with required education, I now have a strong foundation to not only provide optimal patient care but compassionate care. *Aeger Primo*, patient first.

Thank you for taking the time to hear from us today. As a represented member of the Kansas State Assembly I will continue to strive to make certification a standard for all practicing surgical technologist.

Thank you,

Natasha Smith, CST