

HB # 5288 AAC RN as Circulator Testimony  
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Good morning Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Judi Goldberg, and today I am representing myself as well as AORN, the professional association of perioperative registered nurses. AORN has 495 members in Connecticut. I am testifying in support of #5288 the RN Circulator bill.

The Operating Room is a very complex environment, and a RN is the ~~only person qualified to manage that complexity and provide a safe~~ experience for the patient. A circulating nurse develops an individualized plan of care for the patient and works with an interdisciplinary team. Communication skills are a critical component of the role.

The circulating nurse reevaluates the condition of the patient throughout the procedure. Critical thinking and assessment skills are used to quickly reprioritize the care plan when changes occur in the patient's situation. Due to the large number of personnel present in an operating room, the RN is responsible for assuring the patient is safe by monitoring sterile technique and maintaining privacy. Safety is at risk without a registered professional nurse present when there are rapid changes in patient condition. Without a high level of nursing knowledge and critical thinking, communication is delayed or inaccurate, leading to poor outcomes for patients.

Patients in an operating room are under anesthesia, unable to speak for themselves or to make their own decisions. They are vulnerable, and must rely on an advocate, the registered nurse circulator, to look out for their safety and best interests.

As the nursing shortage worsens, facilities may lower their standards of care and use support personnel to fill the role of the RN circulator in order to meet the growing needs of their increasingly complex patient populations. Therefore, this bill will continue to provide a safer environment for patients.

Language that mandates every patient having a registered professional nurse as circulator is the most reliable mechanism to provide safe and effective care for all patients. Connecticut hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers already use RNs as circulators because they realize the importance to their patients of providing safe care. Please support #5288 and help protect our families and friends in the already complicated healthcare system. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.