



## Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Written Testimony of  
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Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee  
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SB 898: An Act Concerning Professional Doctoral Degree Programs

Sen. Bartolomeo, Rep. Willis, Sen. Witkos, Rep. Betts and distinguished members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Christopher Bartels and I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) and an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). I am the former Assistant Program Director of the Yale New Haven Hospital School of Nurse Anesthesia, former adjunct faculty at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), as well as a graduate of the Hospital of Saint Raphael School of Nurse Anesthesia, which was affiliated with CCSU. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists in support of **SB 898: AN ACT CONCERNING PROFESSIONAL DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAMS.**

In recent years, professional groups have developed practice/clinical doctorates, including pharmacy (PharmD), physical therapy (D.P.T.), and Nursing (DNP). Historically, the University of Connecticut has been the doctoral degree-awarding public university in Connecticut. The Connecticut State University (CSU) system does have legislative authority to offer the educational doctorate, the Ed.D. and an Ed.D. for nursing education. The CSU system is requesting the addition of practice doctorate degrees to its legislative authority. The practice doctorate is not a research doctorate. Practice doctorates (also called clinical doctorates) include human medicine (M.D. and D.O.), veterinary medicine (D.V.M.), and law (J.D.).

CCSU currently collaborates with three hospital schools of nurse anesthesia (two in Connecticut and one in Rhode Island) to offer a Master of Science (MS) in Biological Sciences: Anesthesia (collaborations began as early as 1982). Each affiliated hospital school of nurse anesthesia maintains its program accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA) of Nurse Anesthesia Education. However, the COA recently enacted a new requirement that entry-level nurse anesthetists must hold the doctoral degree by 2025. Due to the requirement by the COA for entry-level nurse anesthetists to hold doctoral degrees, CCSU will no longer be able to offer the MS in Anesthesia and needs to offer the Doctorate of Nurse Anesthesia Practice (DNAP) to continue working with our affiliated hospital schools of nurse anesthesia in educating nurse anesthetists. The DNAP will not only be available to prospective new students but also to

practicing CRNAs who would like to advance their education and obtain this post master's degree.

The state of Connecticut has four nurse anesthesia programs. Two of these programs are affiliated with private universities (Fairfield University and Quinnipiac University), and have already moved to offering the doctorate degree. As a former assistant program director of the Yale New Haven Hospital School of Nurse Anesthesia, I speak from experience that the programs affiliated with the state universities are at a distinct competitive disadvantage in attracting strong applicants without the ability to offer a doctorate degree.

The cornerstone of CRNA practice is continuing education. Obtaining an advanced practice doctoral degree will prepare CRNAs to practice in this very complex health care system. The CCSU nurse anesthesia doctorate program will have a focus in "Human factors and patient safety." It will enforce high quality safe anesthesia care, and allow CRNAs to meet the demands of our patients. Connecticut patients and hospitals depend on these nurse anesthesia programs to graduate and supply CRNAs. A loss of these programs would cause a decrease in practitioners and an increase in the cost of training at private institutions. These are just some of the reasons to support this legislation. Thank you for your attention and the opportunity to present this testimony. I would be glad to answer any questions.