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Senator Danny Verdin
Chair, Senate Medical Affairs Committee

Dear Senator Verdin,

As a Gastroenterologist who supervises nurse anesthetists at my endoscopy center, I am writing to urge you to **oppose** S.563 that would remove the physician supervision requirement for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and permit them to practice independently.

When patients come to my center for endoscopic procedures, I am responsible both medically and legally for their care and safety. The nurse anesthetists who work for me and my partners do so under our direct supervision. We conduct the presurgical evaluation, prescribe the drugs to be used by our nurse anesthetists, supervise and direct the care before, during and after the procedure. I am physically present to address any emergent situations that may occur. Removing physician direction and removing the requirement that a physician be immediately available would lower the standard of care that patients expect and deserve.

My practice has supervised nurse anesthetists for many years, and we respect the important job that they do. They are important members of the care team at our endoscopy center. However, we do not agree with the intent of S.563 which would remove physicians from providing medical expertise and supervision during the administration of anesthesia. That would place patients at an unnecessary increased risk.

New drugs, such as propofol, have made endoscopic procedures for my patients more comfortable and safer, but plenty of risks remain. Those risks necessitate retaining physician supervision of nurse anesthetists. I encourage you and the other members of the Senate Medical Affairs Committee not to support this bill. Thank you for your consideration and public service to our state.

Respectfully yours,

March Seabrook, MD, FACG
Immediate Past President, SCMA
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