Senate Health and Human Services Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

March 31, 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of Senate bill 2868, titled AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

Dear Chairperson Murray and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

I am Thomas Meehan, PhD, PA-C from Barrington and Senate District 32. I am also the Program Director for the Physician Assistant Program at Johnson & Wales University which became the first University in Rhode Island to offer a PA program 12 years ago.

I support Senate bill 2868, titled AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

I support bill 2868 because...

- It clarifies the definition of “collaboration” to more accurately reflect the true nature of physician assistant practice. Most PAs are not employed by physicians anymore but instead employed by hospitals, group practices, etc.
- This change in language in no way changes PA scope of practice.
- The multi-state licensing compact requires that all PAs undergo a background check in order to participate. This bill will add that all PAs will undergo a background check similar to physicians.
- PA are licensed on 2-year cycles but the CME requirements in the current statute refer to an annual amount (25h). The bill simply makes the CME requirement 50h over the 2-year license cycle.
- PA practice is currently subject to restrictive covenants from employers. These typically broadly prohibit a PA from moving to another job within a 50 mile radius for 2 years. If a PA does want to change jobs, they are forced to look out of state further exacerbating access to care issues.
- Lastly, PAs are appropriately trained to perform the duties under the “"School and Youth Concussion Act" and the "Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act". Under appropriate collaboration as defined in the statute, PAs should be allowed to sign the paperwork for student athletes to be cleared for participation.

Ultimately, these changes would continue to enhance PAs practice by removing restrictions and enhancing access to healthcare for Rhode Islanders

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak in favor of this bill.

Sincerely,

Thomas Meehan, PhD, PA-C

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Senate District 32