

By: Senator Irvin
By: Representative L. Johnson

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

TO ENCOURAGE THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PASS THE
RESIDENT PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE REDUCTION ACT OF 2021 TO
REFORM THE NATION'S MEDICARE-SUPPORTED GRADUATE
MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND TO PROVIDE RURAL
STATES AND RURAL COMMUNITIES WITH ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES TO MEET THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF
THE FUTURE.

Subtitle

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RESIDENT PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE REDUCTION ACT
OF 2021 TO REFORM MEDICARE-SUPPORTED
GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND
TO PROVIDE RURAL STATES AND COMMUNITIES
WITH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

WHEREAS, the United States is facing a physician shortage of up to one hundred thirty-nine thousand (139,000) physicians by the year 2033 due to a growing and aging population; and

WHEREAS, physicians are the backbone of our nation's healthcare system, and an adequate supply of trained physicians is critical to meeting the healthcare needs of Arkansans today and in the future; and

WHEREAS, a consensus exists that the State of Arkansas will require more trained physicians than will be available and, as of 2019, was ranked forty-seventh in the nation for active physicians per one hundred thousand



(100,000) population; and

WHEREAS, it is projected that the State of Arkansas will need nearly five hundred (500) additional primary care physicians and a sizable increase in the number of cancer, cardiology, neurology, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatric, and other specialists by the year 2030; and

WHEREAS, physicians are vital for the foundation of the nation's healthcare system, and an adequate supply of trained physicians is critical to meeting the healthcare needs of Arkansas citizens now and in the future; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas medical schools are currently training more graduates than existing available residency positions; and

WHEREAS, in an Association of American Medical Colleges "2019 State Physician Workforce Data Report", Arkansas ranked fourth in the nation for retaining physicians who completed medical school and residency training in the state behind Hawaii, California, and Texas; and

WHEREAS, approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of the public funding to support graduate medical education is provided by the Medicare program; and

WHEREAS, Medicare-supported residency positions have been capped since 1997, resulting in an unequal distribution of federally supported residency slots to rural states, which disproportionately affects growing states, including Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, Senator John Boozman served as a lead sponsor for the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2019 to lift the cap on Medicare-supported residency slots; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences worked with Senator Boozman to convene a Graduate Medical Education Summit to study the pressing need to increase the number of residency slots in

Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, the Graduate Medical Education Summit discussion, led by Senator Boozman, included presentations and attendance from the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Veterans Health System of the Ozarks, Community Health Centers of Arkansas, Arkansas medical schools, the Northwest Arkansas Council, the Arkansas Hospital Association, chief executive officers of hospitals in this state, corporate leaders, the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, medical students, municipal and county leaders, and members of the Arkansas General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, in December 2020, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, which provided one thousand (1,000) new Medicare-supported graduate medical education residency slots, and served as the first increase in Medicare-supported graduate medical education residency slots in nearly twenty-five (25) years; and

WHEREAS, Senator John Boozman, Senator Tom Cotton, Congressman Steve Womack, Congressman French Hill, Congressman Bruce Westerman, and Congressman Rick Crawford voted for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, to address Rural Training Track programs, increase collaboration between rural and urban teaching hospitals so that residents can gain experience providing care in rural communities, and make adjustments to address artificially low Medicare caps and per-resident amounts that limit residency training in some hospitals; and

WHEREAS, in March 2021, Senator John Boozman helped introduce the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021 to provide fourteen thousand (14,000) new Medicare graduate medical education slots over seven (7) years; and

WHEREAS, the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021 would continue to prioritize residency slots for teaching hospitals in rural areas, hospitals training over their current graduate medical education caps, hospitals in states with new medical schools or new branch campuses, and hospitals that serve areas designated as health professional shortage areas;

and

WHEREAS, Arkansas will continue to face shortfalls in the number of physicians needed to meet demand for healthcare services in the future despite the efforts of Arkansas medical schools and hospitals to expand graduate medical education; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly affirms that the current cap on Medicare graduate medical education funding for existing teaching hospitals plays a major role in slowing the expansion of graduate medical education efforts across the country and in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, action by the United States Congress is necessary to resolve the issue of resident training in a manner that will allow the states and the nation to meet their citizens' healthcare needs and build a strong foundation for businesses, hospitals, and the economy of the state,

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the members of this body urge the United States Congress to pass legislation increasing federal support for graduate medical education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption of this resolution, an appropriate copy be provided by the Secretary of the Senate to each member of the Arkansas congressional delegation, the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and Governor Asa Hutchinson.