

By: Senators Irvin, Bledsoe, B. Davis, J. English

By: Representatives M. Gray, Barker, Bentley, Brown, Cavanaugh, Crawford, Dalby, C. Fite, Lundstrum,  
J. Mayberry, McKenzie, Speaks, Vaught

## **SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO ENCOURAGE THE PURSUIT OF NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE  
DESIGNATION BY THE WINTHROP P. ROCKEFELLER CANCER  
INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL  
SCIENCES.

### **Subtitle**

TO ENCOURAGE THE PURSUIT OF NATIONAL  
CANCER INSTITUTE DESIGNATION BY THE  
WINTHROP P. ROCKEFELLER CANCER INSTITUTE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL  
SCIENCES.

WHEREAS, in 2020, approximately seventeen thousand nine hundred eighty (17,980) Arkansans were diagnosed with cancer; and

WHEREAS, of those seventeen thousand nine hundred eighty (17,980) Arkansans diagnosed with cancer, a large percentage will die of the disease; and

WHEREAS, the four (4) types of cancer with significantly high annual diagnosis rates in Arkansas are:

(1) Lung and bronchus cancer, with two thousand nine hundred seventy (2,970) diagnoses;

(2) Female breast cancer, with two thousand three hundred



seventy (2,370) diagnoses;

(3) Prostate cancer, with two thousand four hundred seventy (2,470) diagnoses; and

(4) Colorectal cancer, with one thousand five hundred diagnoses (1,500); and

WHEREAS, in each category, the diagnosis of cancer has grown in our Arkansas population exponentially since 2018; and

WHEREAS, over the past twenty-eight (28) years, nationwide cancer-related deaths have decreased by five percent (5%), but in Arkansas the rate of cancer-related deaths has increased by nine percent (9%); and

WHEREAS, only Kentucky, Mississippi, and Oklahoma had higher cancer-related death rates in the past twenty-eight (28) years than Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, cancer is the second-leading cause of death in Arkansas, only surpassed by coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) recently, and may become the leading cause of death within the next decade, surpassing the current leading cause, cardiovascular disease, based on the diagnosis trends in the state; and

WHEREAS, there are currently seventy-one (71) National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Centers, located in thirty-six (36) states and the District of Columbia, including National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Centers in Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, there are no National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Centers in Arkansas, Mississippi, or Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the State of Oklahoma received the seventieth National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center at the Stephenson Cancer Center; and

WHEREAS, having a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in Arkansas will improve and expand access to clinical trials, cancer treatment, cancer prevention, cancer screening, and education in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in Arkansas could serve as a hub of groundbreaking treatments and care for the communities around the state; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas cancer patients must currently leave the state to receive treatment at a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center; and

WHEREAS, National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Centers have expanded treatment options due to research grant funds and experimental trials, and hundreds of research studies are underway at these centers, ranging from basic laboratory research to clinical assessments of new treatments not currently available in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, having a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in the state would save the lives of thousands of Arkansans through expanded treatment opportunities, including opportunities to participate in experimental cancer treatments; and

WHEREAS, being a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center would allow the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences to be awarded more research funds, which will provide additional experimental cancer treatments in the state; and

WHEREAS, a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center will provide support for cancer treatment providers, clinics, and hospitals in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the human suffering caused by cancer, there are economic costs that result from the disease, including medical costs and the impact on the productivity of the cancer patient and his or her family; and

WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is pursuing a designation as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center for the benefit of the more than

three million (3,000,000) citizens of Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, the National Cancer Institute recommends that a cancer center have at least twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) in National Cancer Institute-funded research; and

WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences currently has approximately ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) in National Cancer Institute-funded research; and

WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences can apply for only a limited number of National Cancer Institute grant funds because over sixty percent (60%) of the National Cancer Institute's grant applications require that the cancer center be a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in order to apply for the grant funds; and

WHEREAS, in order to achieve status as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences will need to recruit:

(1) A renowned expert in cancer research to serve as the Director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; and

(2) Nationally recognized National Cancer Institute-funded medical professionals; and

WHEREAS, in late 2019, Dr. Michael Birrer, an internationally known gynecological cancer specialist, was named the Vice Chancellor and Director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and since his joining the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Dr. Birrer has recruited nationally recognized National Cancer Institute-funded medical professionals to join the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute; and

WHEREAS, to be successful in gaining status as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center, ongoing, dedicated financial support from

the State of Arkansas is critical; and

WHEREAS, since the conclusion of the general session of the Ninety-Second General Assembly, several millions of dollars from philanthropic Arkansas families have been contributed, although there are more private dollars to be raised; and

WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is committed to raising at least thirty million dollars (\$30,000,000) in private funds to support the pursuit of achieving status as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center; and

WHEREAS, the private resources pursued by the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences are a part of a cohesive and focused plan that will forever change the cancer outcomes in the state; and

WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences will need a stream of funding between ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) and twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) per year to establish and maintain a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly created a stream of revenue to pursue and maintain a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center under Acts 2019, No. 580; and

WHEREAS, like other states that have been successful in securing status as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center for their cancer centers, it is incumbent upon the State of Arkansas to invest in this initiative; and

WHEREAS, it is a strategic goal of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences to become a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center; and

WHEREAS, additional state government funds will assist the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences secure vital investments from other public and private sources for a true public-private partnership; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that having a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center will bring in an additional seventy million dollars (\$70,000,000) annually to Arkansas's economy and will create one thousand five hundred eighty-four (1,584) new jobs over five (5) years; and

WHEREAS, with Acts 2019, No. 580, the state established a fund solely for the purpose of pursuing and maintaining status as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center for the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; and

WHEREAS, if upon June 30, 2027, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences has not achieved status as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center, then the fund created in the act should sunset; and

WHEREAS, future General Assemblies will have the authority and responsibility to evaluate the progress of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences toward achieving status as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center and adjust Acts 2019, No. 580 accordingly,

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 Senate of the Ninety-Third General Assembly, the House of Representatives concurring, encourage the pursuit of a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center at the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.