

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

By: Representatives Barker, Bentley, A. Brown, K. Brown, R. Burkes, Cavanaugh, Crawford, Dalby,
Duke, Henley, Lundstrum, J. Mayberry, McAlindon, K. Moore, Vaught

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

TO CONTINUE 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 CONTINUE 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 2025, the American Cancer Society estimates that nineteen thousand seven hundred (19,700) Arkansans will be 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 an estimated two thousand six hundred sixty (2,660) diagnoses;

(2) Female breast cancer, with two thousand six hundred ninety (2,690) diagnoses;

(3) Prostate cancer, with two thousand nine hundred thirty



(2,930) diagnoses; and

(4) Colorectal cancer, with one thousand five hundred sixty (1,560) diagnoses; and

WHEREAS, in each category, the diagnosis of cancer has grown in the Arkansas population 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, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Oklahoma had higher cancer-related death rates in the 2022 than Arkansas; and

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

WHEREAS, there are currently seventy-two (72) 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, 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 communities around the State of Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas cancer patients must currently leave the State of Arkansas 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 of Arkansas 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 of Arkansas; 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 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 late 2019, Dr. Michael Birrer, an internationally known medical oncologist specializing in gynecologic cancers, 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 over twenty-five (25) National Cancer Institute-funded laboratory and translational science researchers and fifteen (15) oncologists, formed an external advisory board of cancer center experts, expanded the clinical trial portfolio resulting in two hundred sixty (260) annual accruals, and established a community outreach and engagement program; 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, the private resources pursued by the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences are part of a cohesive and focused plan that will forever change the cancer outcomes in the State of Arkansas; 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, since 2019, the General Assembly has unanimously resolved and encouraged the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of

Arkansas for Medical Sciences every two (2) years in this pursuit; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arkansas applauds the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences on progress towards filing its application for National Cancer Institute-Designated status with the goal of filing during fall 2025 as recommended by its external advisory board; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arkansas recognizes the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences for achieving its private fundraising goal as established in Acts 2019, No. 181 and encourages more private fundraising towards this goal; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arkansas encourages the existing resources of the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission, and other such state and other entities to collaborate with and support the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in programming and other activities towards this state goal of National Cancer Institute-Designated status for early detection and cancer prevention for all Arkansans; and

WHEREAS, during the Ninety-Fourth General Assembly, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders dedicated one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) toward this effort to ensure that all means necessary were available towards the goal of better cancer detection and prevention in the State of Arkansas for all Arkansans and to help fund the pursuit of National Cancer Institute-Designated status for the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences,

NOW THEREFORE,

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

THAT the Senate of the Ninety-Fifth General Assembly, the House of Representatives concurring, continue to 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.