

June 15, 2020

The Honorable David Perdue
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Todd Young
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Perdue, Durbin, Young, Coons, Cornyn, and Leahy:

The American College of Rheumatology (ACR), representing over 9,500 rheumatologists and rheumatology interprofessional team members writes to support and thank you for introducing S. 3599, *The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* which would reallocate visas previously authorized by Congress that have not currently been used to support the American medical workforce. ACR is pleased to support this legislation and applauds you for your work on this issue.

As a specialty that suffers from a severe workforce shortage that often means long wait times for patients to get appointments and to receive care, the ACR has long supported increased funding for residency slots, student loan repayment benefits, other programs to grow the medical workforce and the number of rheumatologists available to serve our patient population, which is estimated to be as high as 91 million Americans by some studies. To this end, the ACR also welcomes foreign medical professionals who wish to serve this patient population.

The *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* creates an important opportunity for 15,000 visas to be reallocated for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and 25,000 visas for foreign-born nurses to ensure durable immigration status for our vital workforce, which our country is relying on now more than ever. By utilizing previously approved but unused visas, the ACR applauds the efficiency of this proposal in prioritizing the needs of the American patient population.

Thank you for your attention to the needs of rheumatology practices and our patients. The ACR looks forward to working with you to reduce the impact of the medical workforce shortage on patients and to ensure that all patients living with rheumatic disease have access to high-quality care. If you have any additional questions, please contact Lennie Shewmaker, JD, Director of Congressional Affairs, at LShewmaker@rheumatology.org.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Blair Solow, MD, MSCS
Chair, Government Affairs Committee
American College of Rheumatology