

TNAFP TENNESSEE ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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September 14, 2020

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-4206

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
357 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Alexander and Senator Blackburn:

On behalf of the Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians (TNAFP), representing over 2,500 family medicine physicians throughout the State of Tennessee, I strongly request your support for S. 3599, the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act. This legislation is of utmost importance in serving our rural communities in the future, and also serving as a long-term solution in closing the gaps in the rural Primary Care workforce.

Family Physicians are acutely aware of the current shortage of primary care physicians across the country, and the important role International Medical Graduates (IMGs) play in addressing this shortage. IMGs play a vital role in caring for some of the most vulnerable populations, as foreign-trained physicians are more likely to practice in lower-income and disadvantaged communities.

From fiscal years 1992 to 2020, Congress authorized over 200,000 visas that went unused. In addition to allocating 40,000 unused visas, of which 25,000 would go to nurses and 15,000 to physicians, family members would be granted visas from the pool of remaining visas not set aside for healthcare workers. This proposal would simply reallocation a limited number of unused visas from prior years for doctors and nurses who are qualified for help in our fight against COVID-19. The bill will not increase current immigration numbers and will not displace American workers, but will simple address worker shortages in vital areas with existing visas.

The Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians would be extremely appreciative of your support of S. 3599, the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jerry P. Wilson, M.D.

President

Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians