



January 26, 2017

The Honorable Jake Files
300 Free Ferry Landing
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72903

Dear Senator Files:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association (AOMA) are writing to express our support for SB 118. This bill amends various sections of the Arkansas Code to recognize the equivalency of allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, in keeping with the intent of Arkansas Code Sec. 17-91-103.¹ The AOA and AOMA strongly support clarification on the equivalency of each of the state's medical schools and the equal rights and privileges of their students and graduates under the Code sections referenced in the bill.

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org. AOMA is a professional organization that represents over 300 DOs providing patient care in Arkansas.

The osteopathic medical profession is the largest growing segment of the health care workforce, with one in four medical students training to become an osteopathic physician. While DOs practice in every medical specialty and in every state across the nation, the osteopathic medical profession emphasizes the importance of providing primary care to patients in rural and underserved areas, and more than 50% of DOs practice in primary care.

With inaugural classes of 115 and 150 students matriculating at the Jonesboro, Arkansas campus of the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine, and the Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2016 and 2017, respectively, the osteopathic medical profession is poised to provide the next generation of physicians able to provide care to Arkansas patients. **The AOA and AOMA thank you for your leadership in introducing SB 118.** Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact Nick Schilligo, AOA's Associate Vice President for State Government Affairs, at nschilligo@osteopathic.org or (312) 202-8185.

Sincerely,

Boyd R. Buser, DO
President, AOA

Gary S. Edwards, DO, FACOFP
President, AOMA

¹ <http://codes.findlaw.com/ar/title-17-professions-occupations-and-businesses/ar-code-sect-17-91-103.html>.

The Honorable Jake Files

January 26, 2017

Page 2

CC: Mark A. Baker, DO, AOA President-elect
William J. Burke, DO, Chair, AOA Department of Governmental Affairs
Richard Thacker, DO, Chair, AOA Bureau of State Government Affairs
Adrienne White-Faines, MPA, AOA Chief Executive Officer
Laura Wooster, Interim Senior Vice President, AOA Public Policy
Nicholas Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, AOA State Government Affairs
Frazier A. Edwards, MPA, Executive Director, AOMA