



June 4, 2019

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jacky Rosen
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Klobuchar, Collins, and Rosen:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to share our support for your legislation to expand and reauthorize the Conrad State 30 J-1 visa waiver program through the *Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act* (S. 948). This legislation is essential to ensuring that our patients in rural and underserved areas have access to care by a physician.

ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 154,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

The College has long recognized the value of international medical graduates (IMG's) and their contributions to health care delivery in this country. Many IMG's provide care in medically underserved areas by participating in J-1 visa waiver programs, including Conrad 30. We support the reauthorization of this program without delay, and also believe that it should be made permanent to give physicians with J-1 visas certainty that they may continue to practice in underserved areas. We urge Congress to consider the permanent reauthorization of the J-1 visa program in the context of broader immigration reform consistent with our policies set forth in our [National Immigration Policy and Access to Health Care](#) policy paper.

ACP is supportive of many of the reforms included in this legislation, including the provision that will increase the number of Conrad 30 J-1 waivers per state, currently capped at 30, to address the increased demand for such waivers by states, while maintaining a well-balanced national distribution. We also support the section of this legislation that would give employment protections for physicians in the program by mandating that their employment contracts specify the number of on call hours the physicians must work, whether the employer

would provide malpractice insurance, and the exact facilities at which the physicians would work.

ACP policy also supports the section of the legislation that would give J-1 visas holders additional flexibility to transfer to a new facility if they can show to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that their employer violated the terms of their employment contract or if the employer violated employment or labor laws. In these circumstances the Secretary of Homeland Security may determine that “extenuating circumstances” exist and the physician will be allowed to transfer to a new facility. We understand that in many cases, it may be difficult or impractical to get this “extenuating circumstances” determination, so we support giving the physicians the ability to do an additional year of service in an underserved area if they leave their employers without this DHS designation, as outlined in this bill. We are pleased that this legislation also includes a provision that would address the current backlog in the system for physicians on J-1 visas who wish to acquire a green card to move to a more permanent residency status. S. 948 would allow physicians who practice in underserved areas for five years to be eligible to receive priority access within the green card application system.

We look forward to working with you to advance this legislation and stand ready to be helpful in any way possible. Please do not hesitate to contact Brian Buckley at bbuckley@acponline.org or at 202-261-4543 if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert M. McLean". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Robert M. McLean, MD, FACP
President