

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS

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April 19, 2017

The Honorable Richard Hudson
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

SUBJECT: Support for H.R. 1704, Accessible Care by Curbing Excessive lawSuitS Act

Dear Speaker Ryan,

On behalf of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), we are writing to support your bill, H.R. 1704, Accessible Care by Curbing Excessive lawSuitS Act. This bill includes needed reforms that will vastly improve the medical-legal system, as well as save the federal government billions of dollars.

Some goals of a well-functioning medical-legal system including:

- Compensating in a timely fashion patients that have been harmed by medical negligence;
- Maximizing the amount of award that goes directly to the patient;
- Minimizing the number of frivolous lawsuits;
- Lowering the costs of professional liability insurance; and
- Reducing the practice of defensive medicine.

Unfortunately, as you are aware, for patients and physicians in most states, the current medical-legal system fails to achieve these goals. As a high-risk specialty, neurosurgery knows only too well how the current system falls short. Consider the following:

- Forty-four percent of neurosurgeons have reported that they limit the type of patients they treat, with 71 percent no longer performing aneurysm surgery, 23 percent no longer treating brain tumors and 75 percent no longer operating on children.
- On average, neurosurgeons are sued every two years, although most of these cases are dropped or resolved in favor of the neurosurgeon.
- Two-thirds of neurosurgeons report ordering imaging or other tests solely to minimize the risk of lawsuits; thus driving up the costs of defensive medicine.
- Neurosurgeons pay the highest professional liability insurance premiums of all physician specialties, typically in excess of \$100,000 per year.

The reforms in H.R. 1704 are based on well-tested reforms that have been in place in several states, including California and Texas, for many years. These reforms have been shown to lower costs and preserve access to care for patients. Further, these reforms will help reduce our national debt at a time when we all agree that federal savings are sorely needed.

Thank you for considering our request for quick Congressional action on this legislation. We firmly believe that passing sensible medical liability reforms will help ensure that patients have timely access to quality health care. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Frederick A. Boop, MD, President
American Association of Neurological Surgeons



Alan M. Scarrow, MD, President
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