

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
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March 21, 2016

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chamber and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, supports H.R. 4771, the "Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act of 2016," which would help relieve a significant portion of the healthcare costs imposed by the broken medical liability system.

Medical liability continues to be an area needing reform. Excessive costs incurred by litigating baseless lawsuits and practicing defensive medicine affect all Americans and cost the federal government billions of dollars in health expenditures. These costs have also resulted in high-risk specialties having a decreased ability to obtain reasonably priced medical liability insurance coverage in many parts of the country. This has forced some hospitals to close altogether or to curtail the ability of at least some types of potentially risky procedures. As a result, patients have to travel further, sometimes across state lines, for medical services or in some circumstances forego needed care.

The costs associated with the current medical liability system also negatively impact jobs. As healthcare costs increase, employers are forced to limit wage growth and hiring. Furthermore, companies are hesitant to locate and hire in areas with medical provider shortages, as it is difficult to attract and maintain necessary talent in these areas.

H.R. 4771 would make many reforms to help reduce these excessive costs while allowing patients who were injured by negligent care to recover all of their economic losses such as medical bills and lost wages. The Chamber supports H.R. 4771, opposes any hostile weakening amendments, and urges this bill's favorable consideration by the Committee.

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten

cc: Members of the Committee on the Judiciary