



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
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Congressman Andy Barr
United States House Of Representatives
1432 Longworth House Office Building
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Congressman Ami Bera, MD
United States House of Representatives
1408 Longworth House Office Building
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Congressmen Barr and Bera:

The American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons is pleased to support H.R. 4016, The Saving Lives, Saving Costs Act of 2014. We believe in the principle of safe harbors as a mechanism to increase patient safety and allow for more stringent adherence to physician-developed clinical practice guidelines and appropriate use criteria. This bill will allow physicians to practice medicine with less fear of frivolous lawsuits.

There is an undeniable need for medical liability reform; this issue is one of the most important in the medical community today. Many doctors fear the repercussions for their patients and their practices if action is not taken soon. According to recent data, more than 30 percent of orthopaedists, obstetricians, trauma surgeons, emergency department physicians, and plastic and reconstructive surgeons are sued each year. In 86 percent of cases, the jury finds the doctor not negligent, yet the cost of defense can range from \$24,000 to \$90,000. Additionally, in 2007, an estimated \$210 billion of health care costs was attributed to defensive medicine. These immense costs have resulted in 43 percent of physicians reducing or eliminating high-risk aspects of their practice and nearly 50 percent of others plan to do so due to the costs associated with medical liability. These unnecessary costs should serve as an impetus for change and calls for medical liability reform and safe harbors.

The Saving Lives, Saving Costs Act of 2014, introduced by Representatives Andy Barr (R-KY) and Ami Bera, MD (D-CA), will help to ensure that patients who require the services of an orthopedic surgeon can receive the vital care they need in a safe and accessible environment. AAOS supports progress in medical liability reform that improves patient safety and reduces the cost of health care. While there is still a lot to do, this bill takes positive steps towards reducing frivolous lawsuits and insurance fraud, which is important to ensure physicians can continue to provide the highest quality patient care.

We look forward to working with you on this and other matters in the future.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Azar, MD
President
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons