

1 State of Arkansas
2 93rd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2021

SCR 7

4
5 By: Senators Irvin, Bledsoe, B. Davis, J. English
6 By: Representatives M. Gray, Barker, Bentley, Brown, Cavanaugh, Crawford, Dalby, C. Fite, Lundstrum,
7 J. Mayberry, McKenzie, Speaks, Vaught

8
9 **SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

10 TO ENCOURAGE THE PURSUIT OF NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE
11 DESIGNATION BY THE WINTHROP P. ROCKEFELLER CANCER
12 INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL
13 SCIENCES.

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16 **Subtitle**

17 TO ENCOURAGE THE PURSUIT OF NATIONAL
18 CANCER INSTITUTE DESIGNATION BY THE
19 WINTHROP P. ROCKEFELLER CANCER INSTITUTE
20 AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL
21 SCIENCES.

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24
25 WHEREAS, in 2020, approximately seventeen thousand nine hundred eighty
26 (17,980) Arkansans were diagnosed with cancer; and

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28 WHEREAS, of those seventeen thousand nine hundred eighty (17,980)
29 Arkansans diagnosed with cancer, a large percentage will die of the disease;
30 and

31
32 WHEREAS, the four (4) types of cancer with significantly high annual
33 diagnosis rates in Arkansas are:

34 (1) Lung and bronchus cancer, with two thousand nine hundred
35 seventy (2,970) diagnoses;

36 (2) Female breast cancer, with two thousand three hundred



1 seventy (2,370) diagnoses;

2 (3) Prostate cancer, with two thousand four hundred seventy
3 (2,470) diagnoses; and

4 (4) Colorectal cancer, with one thousand five hundred diagnoses
5 (1,500); and

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7 WHEREAS, in each category, the diagnosis of cancer has grown in our
8 Arkansas population exponentially since 2018; and

9
10 WHEREAS, over the past twenty-eight (28) years, nationwide cancer-
11 related deaths have decreased by five percent (5%), but in Arkansas the rate
12 of cancer-related deaths has increased by nine percent (9%); and

13
14 WHEREAS, only Kentucky, Mississippi, and Oklahoma had higher cancer-
15 related death rates in the past twenty-eight (28) years than Arkansas; and

16
17 WHEREAS, cancer is the second-leading cause of death in Arkansas, only
18 surpassed by coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) recently, and may become the leading
19 cause of death within the next decade, surpassing the current leading cause,
20 cardiovascular disease, based on the diagnosis trends in the state; and

21
22 WHEREAS, there are currently seventy-one (71) National Cancer
23 Institute-Designated Cancer Centers, located in thirty-six (36) states and
24 the District of Columbia, including National Cancer Institute-Designated
25 Cancer Centers in Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Tennessee; and

26
27 WHEREAS, there are no National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer
28 Centers in Arkansas, Mississippi, or Louisiana; and

29
30 WHEREAS, in 2018, the State of Oklahoma received the seventieth
31 National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center at the Stephenson Cancer
32 Center; and

33
34 WHEREAS, having a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in
35 Arkansas will improve and expand access to clinical trials, cancer treatment,
36 cancer prevention, cancer screening, and education in Arkansas; and

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2 WHEREAS, a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in
3 Arkansas could serve as a hub of groundbreaking treatments and care for the
4 communities around the state; and
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6 WHEREAS, Arkansas cancer patients must currently leave the state to
7 receive treatment at a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center;
8 and
9

10 WHEREAS, National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Centers have
11 expanded treatment options due to research grant funds and experimental
12 trials, and hundreds of research studies are underway at these centers,
13 ranging from basic laboratory research to clinical assessments of new
14 treatments not currently available in Arkansas; and
15

16 WHEREAS, having a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in
17 the state would save the lives of thousands of Arkansans through expanded
18 treatment opportunities, including opportunities to participate in
19 experimental cancer treatments; and
20

21 WHEREAS, being a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center
22 would allow the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of
23 Arkansas for Medical Sciences to be awarded more research funds, which will
24 provide additional experimental cancer treatments in the state; and
25

26 WHEREAS, a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center will
27 provide support for cancer treatment providers, clinics, and hospitals in
28 Arkansas; and
29

30 WHEREAS, in addition to the human suffering caused by cancer, there are
31 economic costs that result from the disease, including medical costs and the
32 impact on the productivity of the cancer patient and his or her family; and
33

34 WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University
35 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is pursuing a designation as a National
36 Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center for the benefit of the more than

1 three million (3,000,000) citizens of Arkansas; and

2
3 WHEREAS, the National Cancer Institute recommends that a cancer center
4 have at least twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) in National Cancer
5 Institute-funded research; and

6
7 WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University
8 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences currently has approximately ten million
9 dollars (\$10,000,000) in National Cancer Institute-funded research; and

10
11 WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University
12 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences can apply for only a limited number of
13 National Cancer Institute grant funds because over sixty percent (60%) of the
14 National Cancer Institute's grant applications require that the cancer center
15 be a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in order to apply for
16 the grant funds; and

17
18 WHEREAS, in order to achieve status as a National Cancer Institute-
19 Designated Cancer Center, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the
20 University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences will need to recruit:

21 (1) A renowned expert in cancer research to serve as the
22 Director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of
23 Arkansas for Medical Sciences; and

24 (2) Nationally recognized National Cancer Institute-funded
25 medical professionals; and

26
27 WHEREAS, in late 2019, Dr. Michael Birrer, an internationally known
28 gynecological cancer specialist, was named the Vice Chancellor and Director
29 of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas
30 for Medical Sciences and since his joining the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer
31 Institute, Dr. Birrer has recruited nationally recognized National Cancer
32 Institute-funded medical professionals to join the Winthrop P. Rockefeller
33 Cancer Institute; and

34
35 WHEREAS, to be successful in gaining status as a National Cancer
36 Institute-Designated Cancer Center, ongoing, dedicated financial support from

1 the State of Arkansas is critical; and

2
3 WHEREAS, since the conclusion of the general session of the Ninety-
4 Second General Assembly, several millions of dollars from philanthropic
5 Arkansas families have been contributed, although there are more private
6 dollars to be raised; and

7
8 WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University
9 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is committed to raising at least thirty
10 million dollars (\$30,000,000) in private funds to support the pursuit of
11 achieving status as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center; and

12
13 WHEREAS, the private resources pursued by the Winthrop P. Rockefeller
14 Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences are a
15 part of a cohesive and focused plan that will forever change the cancer
16 outcomes in the state; and

17
18 WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University
19 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences will need a stream of funding between ten
20 million dollars (\$10,000,000) and twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) per
21 year to establish and maintain a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer
22 Center; and

23
24 WHEREAS, the General Assembly created a stream of revenue to pursue and
25 maintain a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center under Acts
26 2019, No. 580; and

27
28 WHEREAS, like other states that have been successful in securing status
29 as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center for their cancer
30 centers, it is incumbent upon the State of Arkansas to invest in this
31 initiative; and

32
33 WHEREAS, it is a strategic goal of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer
34 Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences to become a
35 National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center; and

36

1 WHEREAS, additional state government funds will assist the Winthrop P.
2 Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical
3 Sciences secure vital investments from other public and private sources for a
4 true public-private partnership; and

5
6 WHEREAS, it is estimated that having a National Cancer Institute-
7 Designated Cancer Center will bring in an additional seventy million dollars
8 (\$70,000,000) annually to Arkansas's economy and will create one thousand
9 five hundred eighty-four (1,584) new jobs over five (5) years; and

10
11 WHEREAS, with Acts 2019, No. 580, the state established a fund solely
12 for the purpose of pursuing and maintaining status as a National Cancer
13 Institute-Designated Cancer Center for the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer
14 Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; and

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16 WHEREAS, if upon June 30, 2027, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer
17 Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences has not achieved
18 status as a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center, then the fund
19 created in the act should sunset; and

20
21 WHEREAS, future General Assemblies will have the authority and
22 responsibility to evaluate the progress of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer
23 Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences toward achieving
24 status as a National Cancer Institute-Designed Cancer Center and adjust Acts
25 2019, No. 580 accordingly,

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27 NOW THEREFORE,

28 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
29 STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

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31 THAT the Senate of the Ninety-Third General Assembly, the House of
32 Representatives concurring, encourage the pursuit of a National Cancer
33 Institute-Designated Cancer Center at the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer
34 Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.