



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 15, 2010

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), **I urge you to vote against the Sessions-McCaskill amendment (S.A. 3453) to H.R. 1586 that would impose statutory spending caps through fiscal year (FY) 2013, effectively freezing domestic discretionary spending for four years (FY 2010 - FY 2013).** AACOM represents the administrations, faculty, and students of the nation's 26 colleges of osteopathic medicine and three branch campuses that offer the doctor of osteopathic medicine degree. More than 18,000 students are currently enrolled in osteopathic medical schools. Nearly one in five U.S. medical students is training to be an osteopathic physician, a ratio that is expected to grow to one in four by 2019.

The Sessions-McCaskill amendment will immeasurably harm those who rely on the U.S. government to provide basic and necessary services, particularly in times of economic hardship. The amendment covers public health agencies in the federal government -- including the Agency for Health Research and Quality, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Indian Health Service (IHS), the National Institutes of Health, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration -- that are essential for improving health and health care through greater access, higher quality, lower costs, improved safety, and faster cures. In particular, this amendment would adversely affect programs of utmost importance to AACOM by freezing spending for the Title VII health professions programs, the National Health Service Corps, the IHS Health Professions Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program, the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, as well as comparative effectiveness research.

AACOM believes that the determination of discretionary spending should be established each year through the budget and appropriations process and that the establishment of caps will have a significant negative impact on the public health system. Locking in discretionary spending caps prior to an analysis of their impact and without flexibility to respond to changing economic and budgetary issues during the upcoming years will likely prove harmful to the federal public health agencies that osteopathic medical schools and students depend on for necessary services and opportunities.

5550 Friendship Boulevard
Suite 310
Chevy Chase, MD 20815-7231
P 301.968.4142
F 301.968.4101
www.aacom.org

AACOM strongly urges you to vote no on the Sessions-McCaskill amendment. Thank you very much for taking the time to consider AACOM's position on this crucial matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SC Shannon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Stephen C. Shannon, D.O., M.P.H.
President and CEO