

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025

SCR 5

4
5 By: Senators Irvin, B. Davis, J. English
6 By: Representatives Barker, Bentley, A. Brown, K. Brown, R. Burkes, Cavanaugh, Crawford, Dalby,
7 Duke, Henley, Lundstrum, J. Mayberry, McAlindon, K. Moore, Vaught

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9 **SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

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

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16 **Subtitle**

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

22
23 WHEREAS, in 2025, the American Cancer Society estimates that nineteen
24 thousand seven hundred (19,700) Arkansans will be diagnosed with cancer; and

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

29
30 WHEREAS, the four (4) types of cancer with significantly high annual
31 diagnosis rates in Arkansas are:

32 (1) Lung and bronchus cancer, with an estimated two thousand six
33 hundred sixty (2,660) diagnoses;

34 (2) Female breast cancer, with two thousand six hundred ninety
35 (2,690) diagnoses;

36 (3) Prostate cancer, with two thousand nine hundred thirty



1 (2,930) diagnoses; and

2 (4) Colorectal cancer, with one thousand five hundred sixty
3 (1,560) diagnoses; and

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5 WHEREAS, in each category, the diagnosis of cancer has grown in the
6 Arkansas population since 2018; and

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

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12 WHEREAS, only Kentucky, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Oklahoma had
13 higher cancer-related death rates in the 2022 than Arkansas; and

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

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21 WHEREAS, there are currently seventy-two (72) National Cancer
22 Institute-Designated Cancer Centers, located in thirty-six (36) states and
23 the District of Columbia, including National Cancer Institute-Designated
24 Cancer Centers in Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Tennessee; and

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

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29 WHEREAS, having a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in
30 Arkansas will improve and expand access to clinical trials, cancer treatment,
31 cancer prevention, cancer screening, and education in Arkansas; and

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33 WHEREAS, a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in
34 Arkansas could serve as a hub of groundbreaking treatments and care for
35 communities around the State of Arkansas; and

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1 WHEREAS, Arkansas cancer patients must currently leave the State of
2 Arkansas to receive treatment at a National Cancer Institute-Designated
3 Cancer Center; and
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5 WHEREAS, National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Centers have
6 expanded treatment options due to research grant funds and experimental
7 trials, and hundreds of research studies are underway at these centers,
8 ranging from basic laboratory research to clinical assessments of new
9 treatments not currently available in Arkansas; and
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11 WHEREAS, having a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in
12 the State of Arkansas would save the lives of thousands of Arkansans through
13 expanded treatment opportunities, including opportunities to participate in
14 experimental cancer treatments; and
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16 WHEREAS, being a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center
17 would allow the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of
18 Arkansas for Medical Sciences to be awarded more research funds, which will
19 provide additional experimental cancer treatments in the State of Arkansas;
20 and
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22 WHEREAS, a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center will
23 provide support for cancer treatment providers, clinics, and hospitals in
24 Arkansas; and
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26 WHEREAS, in addition to the human suffering caused by cancer, there are
27 economic costs that result from the disease, including medical costs and the
28 impact on the productivity of the cancer patient and his or her family; and
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30 WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University
31 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is pursuing a designation as a National
32 Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center for the benefit of the more than
33 three million (3,000,000) citizens of Arkansas; and
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35 WHEREAS, the National Cancer Institute recommends that a cancer center
36 have at least ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) in National Cancer Institute-

1 funded research; and

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3 WHEREAS, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University
4 of Arkansas for Medical Sciences can apply for only a limited number of
5 National Cancer Institute grant funds because over sixty percent (60%) of the
6 National Cancer Institute's grant applications require that the cancer center
7 be a National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center in order to apply for
8 the grant funds; and

9

10 WHEREAS, in late 2019, Dr. Michael Birrer, an internationally known
11 medical oncologist specializing in gynecologic cancers, was named the Vice
12 Chancellor and Director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at
13 the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and since his joining the
14 Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Dr. Birrer has recruited over
15 twenty-five (25) National Cancer Institute-funded laboratory and
16 translational science researchers and fifteen (15) oncologists, formed an
17 external advisory board of cancer center experts, expanded the clinical trial
18 portfolio resulting in two hundred sixty (260) annual accruals, and
19 established a community outreach and engagement program; and

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21 WHEREAS, to be successful in gaining status as a National Cancer
22 Institute-Designated Cancer Center, ongoing, dedicated financial support from
23 the State of Arkansas is critical; and

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25 WHEREAS, the private resources pursued by the Winthrop P. Rockefeller
26 Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences are part
27 of a cohesive and focused plan that will forever change the cancer outcomes
28 in the State of Arkansas; and

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30 WHEREAS, it is estimated that having a National Cancer Institute-
31 Designated Cancer Center will bring in an additional seventy million dollars
32 (\$70,000,000) annually to Arkansas's economy and will create one thousand
33 five hundred eighty-four (1,584) new jobs over five (5) years; and

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35 WHEREAS, since 2019, the General Assembly has unanimously resolved and
36 encouraged the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of

1 Arkansas for Medical Sciences every two (2) years in this pursuit; and

2
3 WHEREAS, the State of Arkansas applauds the Winthrop P. Rockefeller
4 Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences on
5 progress towards filing its application for National Cancer Institute-
6 Designated status with the goal of filing during fall 2025 as recommended by
7 its external advisory board; and

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9 WHEREAS, the State of Arkansas recognizes the Winthrop P. Rockefeller
10 Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences for
11 achieving its private fundraising goal as established in Acts 2019, No. 181
12 and encourages more private fundraising towards this goal; and

13
14 WHEREAS, the State of Arkansas encourages the existing resources of the
15 Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, the Arkansas Tobacco
16 Settlement Commission, and other such state and other entities to collaborate
17 with and support the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the
18 University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in programming and other
19 activities towards this state goal of National Cancer Institute-Designated
20 status for early detection and cancer prevention for all Arkansans; and

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22 WHEREAS, during the Ninety-Fourth General Assembly, Governor Sarah
23 Huckabee Sanders dedicated one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) toward
24 this effort to ensure that all means necessary were available towards the
25 goal of better cancer detection and prevention in the State of Arkansas for
26 all Arkansans and to help fund the pursuit of National Cancer Institute-
27 Designated status for the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the
28 University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences,

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30 NOW THEREFORE,

31 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
32 STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

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34 THAT the Senate of the Ninety-Fifth General Assembly, the House of
35 Representatives concurring, continue to encourage the pursuit of a National
36 Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center at the Winthrop P. Rockefeller

1 Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

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