



April 26, 2017

The Honorable Fred H. Mills, Jr.  
Chairman  
Louisiana State Senate Health and Welfare Committee  
1010 Martin Street  
Parks, Louisiana 70582

Dear Chairman Mills:

**The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Louisiana Osteopathic Medical Association (LOMA) are writing to encourage you to oppose SB 194.** This bill deletes current statutory language that requires board-certified physicians hold a certification from a board recognized by the AOA or the American Board of Medical Specialties, and replaces it with language that allows physicians to advertise board certification from any entity verifiable by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners. The AOA and LOMA believe that recognizing board certification from “any verifiable entity,” without any standards for examination or competency demonstration requirements, erodes the standard of care and could place the health and safety of Louisiana’s patients at risk.

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at [www.osteopathic.org](http://www.osteopathic.org). LOMA is a professional medical organization that represents over 200 DOs providing patient care in Louisiana.

“Board certified” is a term the public considers to have significant meaning and importance, but it may be widely and inconsistently used. Numerous “boards” exist that have names that deliberately mislead consumers, but have no legitimate testing or training programs. Both physicians and patients have been misled by such “boards” which offer the ability to claim “board certification” in exchange for a fee, but do not have training which measures up to professional standards. The existing law is needed in order to protect the public by requiring that certain robust training and examination standards are in place to assure competency in the specialty area of practice being advertised.

Patients deserve to know that the credentials being advertised by health care professionals meet the competency demonstration requirements needed to protect patients. Uninformed choices could lead to avoidable negative unintended consequences. **We urge you to protect the safety of Louisiana patients by opposing SB 194.** Should you need any additional information, please feel free to

The Honorable Fred H. Mills, Jr.  
April 26, 2017  
Page 2

contact Nicholas Schilligo, MS, AOA Associate Vice President, State Government Affairs, at nschilligo@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

Sincerely,



Boyd R. Buser, DO  
President, AOA



Reatha Williams, DO  
President, LOMA

CC: Mark A. Baker, DO, AOA President-elect  
William J. Burke, DO, Chair, AOA Department of Governmental Affairs  
Richard Thacker, DO, Chair, AOA Bureau of State Government Affairs  
Adrienne White-Faines, MPA, AOA Chief Executive Officer  
Laura Wooster, Senior Vice President, AOA Public Policy  
Nicholas Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, AOA, State Government Affairs  
Ed Williams, PhD, Executive Director, LOMA