February 12, 2016

Chairman Tom Flanigan
Missouri House of Representatives
Chairman, Select Committee on Budget
201 W Capitol Avenue
Room 309
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear Chairman Flanigan:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (MAOPS) are writing to express our support for HB 2010. This bill appropriates $2,430,434.00 to fund the Primary Care Resource Initiative Program (PRIMO). This program would provide financial aid and forgivable loans to medical students pursuing health care training leading to Missouri licensure, including primary care medicine. The AOA and MAOPS strongly believe that providing options for more affordable education in the state will not only help attract students to Missouri’s Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, but will also assist in osteopathic physicians expanding access to care for patients throughout Missouri. Additionally, HB 2010 will help address the current primary care physician workforce shortage and work toward providing an adequate supply of primary care physicians for Missouri patients in the future.

The AOA represents more than 123,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs, is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools, and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org. MAOPS is a professional organization that represents over 2,600 osteopathic physicians in Missouri.

The financial benefits provided to medical students through HB 2010 will have a positive impact on the delivery of primary care health services in the state of Missouri. Greater than 50% of DOs practice primary care and the osteopathic medical profession has long emphasized the importance of providing care to patients in rural and underserved areas. While DOs make up 7% of all US physicians, they are responsible for 16% of patient visits in communities with populations of fewer than 2,500. Overall, 40% of all physicians who are located in medically underserved areas or treat medically underserved populations are osteopathic physicians.

The AOA and MAOPS encourage access to affordable education and increasing the supply of primary care physicians. We believe that HB 2010 will help the state address both of these
**Issues.** Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Nicholas A. Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, State Government Affairs, at nschilligo@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

Sincerely,

John W. Becher, DO  
President, AOA

Mark Pelikan, DO  
President, MAOPS

CC:  
Boyd R. Buser, DO, AOA President-elect  
Joseph A. Giaimo, DO, Chair, AOA Department of Governmental Affairs  
Michael K. Murphy, DO, Chair, AOA Bureau of State Government Affairs  
Adrienne White-Faines, MPA, AOA Chief Executive Officer  
Ray Quintero, Senior Vice President, AOA Public Policy  
Nicholas Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, AOA State Government Affairs  
Brian Bowles, Executive Director, MAOPS