

August 27, 2025

The Honorable John Joyce, MD
U.S. House of Representatives
2102 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Deborah Ross
U.S. House of Representatives
1221 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Joyce and Ross:

On behalf of the 39,000 orthopaedic surgeons and residents represented by the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), I write to express our strong support for the Specialty Physicians Advancing Rural Care (SPARC) Act (H.R. 4681) to create a student loan repayment program for specialty physicians who practice in rural areas.

Rural communities across the United States face significant challenges in accessing specialty medical care, including orthopaedic services. Patients in these areas often encounter delays in diagnosis and treatment, which negatively impact outcomes and quality of life. The SPARC Act addresses these workforce shortages by incentivizing specialty physicians to practice in rural and underserved areas.¹

AAOS strongly supports the Act's loan repayment program, which offers eligible providers up to \$250,000 in loan repayment in exchange for a six-year commitment to practice in underserved communities.² This program will promote retention of specialty providers in regions where they are most needed, increase access to high-quality care, and strengthen healthcare infrastructure in rural areas.

Current workforce shortages have contributed to increased burnout and challenges in recruiting and retaining physicians. The SPARC Act represents a meaningful step towards addressing these issues by reducing financial barriers and supporting long-term workforce development.

We strongly support the SPARC Act and stand ready to help advance this important effort to protect the future of rural access to care. Should you have any questions, please contact Lori Shoaf, JD, MA, AAOS Office of Government Relations at shoaf@aaos.org.

Sincerely,

¹ <https://johnjoyce.house.gov/media/press-releases/dr-joyce-introduces-bipartisan-legislation-support-physicians-serving-rural>

² <https://www.wicker.senate.gov/services/files/ADB4C15E-4401-45CB-93EE-61591A0A300B>



Adam Bruggeman, MD, MHA, FAAOS, FAOrthoA
Chair, AAOS Council on Advocacy

cc: Annunziato Amendola, MD, FAAOS, AAOS President
Wilford K. Gibson, MD, FAAOS, AAOS First Vice President
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