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Before departing for the July 4 recess, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1215, "Protecting Access to Care Act," 218-210, a bill that SVS supports. The legislation is modeled after medical liability reform laws already in place in Texas and California, among other states that have a positive effect on increasing access to care and keeping health care costs affordable for patients and physicians.

The bill provides compensation for all economic losses of medical negligence, allowing for payment of past and future medical expenses, lost wages, rehabilitation costs and other out-of-pocket expenses. It also caps non-economic damages at \$250,000 for damages awarded for pain and suffering.

The SVS, a member of the Health Coalition on Liability and Access (HCLA), signed onto a letter in support of the legislation prior to the passage of H.R. 1215 (available at [vsweb.org/TBD](http://vsweb.org/TBD)).

The Society believes that by enacting a reasonable statute of limitations of three years after an injury for filing lawsuits and limiting attorney fees, the bill will ensure quicker resolution to claims. The proposed legislation also protects state authority by allowing states to establish or keep reforms that may differ from federal legislation.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the comprehensive medical reforms included in the Protecting Access to Care Act would lead to cost savings of \$44 billion over the next 10 years for federal health care programs such as Medicare, and also would reduce the national deficit by almost \$50 billion over the same period.

Mike Stinson, HCLA Chair said, "I applaud the House for making comprehensive medical liability reform and patient access to care a high-priority health care policy initiative for this Congress and encourage the Senate to quickly do the same."

However, the prospect for passage in the Senate this year is not positive; no companion bill has been introduced.

Read the letter of support to Speaker Paul Ryan [here](#).

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