

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 9, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 174

Introduced by Assembly Member Gray
(Principal coauthor: Senator Cannella)

January 22, 2015

An act relating to the University of California, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 174, as amended, Gray. University of California: medical education.

Existing provisions of the California Constitution establish the University of California as a public trust under the administration of the Regents of the University of California. The University of California system includes 10 campuses, which are located in Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Merced, Riverside, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz.

This bill would express findings and declarations of the Legislature relating to the role of the University of California with respect to access to health care in the San Joaquin Valley.

The bill would appropriate \$1,855,000 from the General Fund to the regents each fiscal year, commencing with the ~~2015–17~~ 2016–17 fiscal year, for allocation to the University of California to support expansion of the San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education, as specified.

The bill would appropriate \$1,000,000 from the General Fund to the Regents of the University of California during the ~~2015–17~~ 2016–17 fiscal year for allocation to the University of California to support a 2-year planning effort geared toward the establishment of a separate

traditional medical school at the University of California, Merced, as specified.

Vote: $\frac{2}{3}$. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.
 State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) ~~The federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act,~~
- 4 ~~when fully implemented in 2014, will mean that Act provides~~
- 5 millions of previously uninsured Californians ~~will be seeking~~
- 6 access to health services, including physician care. As a result of
- 7 this additional demand for physician services, the projected
- 8 statewide physician shortfall is 17,000 for 2015.
- 9 (b) The San Joaquin Valley, which runs from Stockton to
- 10 Bakersfield, is rich in cultural diversity and is the nation’s leading
- 11 agricultural region. However, the valley is disproportionately
- 12 affected by the state’s physician shortage, which is expected to
- 13 intensify in the years ahead given the high rate of population
- 14 growth in the area. Access to health care is 31 percent lower in the
- 15 San Joaquin Valley than in the rest of California.
- 16 (c) Several regions of the San Joaquin Valley are federally
- 17 designated Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs). The calculation
- 18 of MUAs involves four variables: the ratio of primary medical
- 19 care physicians per 1,000 population, the infant mortality rate, the
- 20 percentage of the population with incomes below the poverty level,
- 21 and the percentage of the population 65 years of age or over.
- 22 (d) To help address California’s physician workforce needs, the
- 23 Regents of the University of California engaged in a comprehensive
- 24 strategic planning process and, in May 2008, approved moving
- 25 forward with planning efforts leading to the development of a
- 26 possible medical school at the campus of the University of
- 27 California, Merced (UC Merced). At that time, the regents also
- 28 approved moving forward with other preparations, such as planning
- 29 for the initial basic sciences and clinical infrastructure. Upon
- 30 completion of these and other activities, the regents envisioned
- 31 that a formal proposal to establish a new medical school eventually
- 32 could be developed.

1 (e) The medical schools of the University of California,
2 including a possible future medical school at UC Merced, will play
3 an important role in addressing California’s physician shortages.

4 (f) Medical education and a possible future UC Merced School
5 of Medicine will further contribute to the economic growth of the
6 San Joaquin Valley and the state, as well as expand educational
7 opportunities for valley residents, and will further support UC
8 Merced’s trajectory toward becoming a top-tier university.

9 (g) UC Merced’s San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical
10 Education (PRIME) is providing a key interim resource for training
11 valley health care providers. This program accomplishes all of the
12 following:

13 (1) Strengthens the desire for new physicians to practice in the
14 San Joaquin Valley, which is one of California’s most medically
15 underserved areas.

16 (2) Reduces health disparities and inequalities in the San Joaquin
17 Valley.

18 (3) Forms lasting relationships between the program and
19 communities, hospitals, clinics, and physicians to enhance health
20 care in the region.

21 (h) Students who take part in PRIME benefit from firsthand
22 experience with interdisciplinary health care by providing care in
23 medically underserved communities, working with patients and
24 families from culturally diverse backgrounds, and developing a
25 true understanding of the issues and conditions that impact access
26 to and quality of health care in the region.

27 (i) Despite its numerous benefits for its region, PRIME lacks
28 an ongoing source of funding for its current enrollment as well as
29 the financial resources to expand capacity to meet the needs of the
30 valley.

31 (j) Given the San Joaquin Valley’s health care needs and the
32 critical role that a possible future medical school at UC Merced
33 would play in addressing those needs, it is essential for the State
34 of California to continue developing the valley’s health care
35 resources by sustaining the current PRIME enrollment, expanding
36 that program’s capacity, and continuing to move toward the
37 establishment of a medical school at UC Merced.

38 SEC. 2. The sum of one million eight hundred fifty-five
39 thousand dollars (\$1,855,000) is hereby appropriated from the
40 General Fund to the Regents of the University of California each

1 fiscal year, commencing with the ~~2015–17~~ 2016–17 fiscal year,
2 for allocation to the University of California to support expansion
3 of the San Joaquin Valley PRIME program to admit up to 12
4 students per year and operate the program with up to 48 student
5 participants from across the four-year curriculum annually.

6 SEC. 3. The sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) is hereby
7 appropriated from the General Fund to the Regents of the
8 University of California during the ~~2015–17~~ 2016–17 fiscal year
9 for allocation to the University of California, to support a two-year
10 planning effort geared toward the establishment of a separate
11 traditional medical school at the University of California, Merced.
12 The effort shall include determination of the necessary program
13 components such as basic and clinical science courses, curriculum,
14 capital needs, one-time and ongoing operational funding, student
15 support services, and other necessary components. The University
16 of California shall submit a report to the appropriate policy and
17 fiscal committees of the Legislature by March 1, ~~2018~~, 2019,
18 summarizing its planning efforts and providing recommendations
19 and estimates for the infrastructure, personnel, and funding, and
20 time necessary to establish and maintain such a program.