



## H.R. 5571 – To extend for 5 years the program relating to waiver of the foreign country residence requirement with respect to international medical graduates

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### FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 5571, as amended, is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) on March 10, 2008. The House Committee on the Judiciary approved the bill by voice vote on April 2, 2008, and the House passed the bill by voice vote on May 21, 2008. The Senate amended the bill and passed it by unanimous consent on September 26, 2008.

H.R. 5571, as amended, is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on May 19, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

H.R. 5571, as amended, reauthorizes the Conrad 30 J Waiver Program through March 6, 2009. The waiver program allows foreign doctors that trained in the United States under a J-1 visa to work in the United States in medically underserved areas without first returning to their home country. The waiver must be applied for by either Interested Government Agencies or by a state health department.

*\*Note: The House passed version of H.R. 5571 would have reauthorized the program through June 1, 2013.*

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### BACKGROUND

According to the Congressional Research Service, there are over 870,000 practicing physicians in the United States, as of 2003. A significant number of physicians practicing in the United States are foreign nationals, who received medical training in the U.S. under the J-1 visa. The J-1 visa allows foreigners to train in the U.S., but, afterwards, they are required to return to their home countries for a minimum of two years before applying to return to the U.S.

Interested Government Agencies, like the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services, can apply to have this return requirement waived for doctors who would work in medically underserved areas. Since 1994, State governments have also been permitted to apply for waivers. The waiver allows the doctors to work as nonimmigrants with H-1B status. Waiver recipients are not counted against the annual cap on H-1B visas.

The program was most recently extended by the Physicians for Underserved Areas Act (P.L. 109-477), which the President signed into law on January 12, 2007.

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### COST

For the House passed version of H.R. 5571, the Congressional Budget “estimates that implementing H.R. 5571 would result in no significant net cost to the federal government.” ([CBO Estimate for H.R. 5571](#))

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### STAFF CONTACT

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