

**A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY
LEGISLATOR MILLS**

Re: Support for the Protecting Rural Access to Care Act

WHEREAS, the Protecting Rural Access to Care Act (the Act) has been introduced by Congressman Antonio Delgado (D-NY) and Congresswoman Elise Stefanik (R-NY), and later sponsored by Congressman Chris Jacobs (R-NY), to attempt to protect small and rural hospitals across the United States like the Bertrand Chaffee Hospital in Springville; and

WHEREAS, the Act secures the Critical Access Hospital (CAH) status of smaller hospitals. CAH status, in turn, provides qualifying hospitals with higher reimbursement levels from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) based on the need to provide medical services to our rural communities; and

WHEREAS, Bertrand Chaffee Hospital provides quality health care services to the thousands of residents living in Erie County's southern tier. In 2015, CMS changed guidelines as to how funding was to be provided to hospitals based on their proximity to other health care service providers. Based on these changes and the recent influx of high-care COVID patients, many rural hospitals are unable to continue operating; and

WHEREAS, the Protecting Rural Access to Care Act would restore the pre-2015 distance standard permanently for Critical Access Hospitals certified prior to 2015, require CMS to engage in public notice and comment period for any future guidance or regulation changes made to the designation criteria for CAHs; and ensure that hospitals seeking CAH certification or recertification will be subject to the pre-2015 standard, unless any formal update to distance criteria is finalized; and

WHEREAS, without these additional without additional dollars provided by this act, already struggling rural hospitals will be forced to continue to cut back care and many have to close despite the outstanding work they have done during the course of the pandemic.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that this honorable body hereby urges the U.S. House of Representatives to take action and approve the Protecting Rural Access to Care Act to protect funding for rural hospitals both here in Erie County and across the nation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to Bertrand Chaffee Hospital, Congressman Antonio Delgado (D-NY), Congresswoman Elise Stefanik (R-NY), Congressman Chris Jacobs (R-NY), and Congressman Brian Higgins (D-NY), and any other party deemed necessary and proper.

Fiscal Impact: None