

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters District 1
Chris Parlier..... District 2
Jeff Flores District 3
David Couch District 4
Leticia Perez..... District 5



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

March 25, 2026

The Honorable Mike Fong
Chair, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1852 (Bains), Kern Medical Education Authority - SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Fong,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for AB 1852 (Bains), which establishes the statutory framework necessary to advance medical education in Kern County by authorizing the creation of the Kern Medical Education Authority. This bill represents an important next step in addressing the longstanding shortage of physicians and healthcare professionals in our county and across the broader San Joaquin Valley.

Kern County continues to experience one of the most severe healthcare access gaps in California, driven by chronic provider shortages and an aging rural physician workforce. Despite ongoing efforts, our region still faces the lowest ratio of licensed medical professionals in the state. This shortage places strain on families, hospitals, and community clinics and has profound impacts on health outcomes, especially in underserved and rural communities.

AB 1852 provides a thoughtful and responsible solution by enabling the California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) and the Kern Community College District (KCCD) to move forward with establishing a medical school should the University of California not take formal steps by July 1, 2027. By authorizing the development of a Kern Medical Education Authority, the bill ensures there is a clear, locally driven governance structure that can take action if necessary to meet the region's healthcare workforce needs.

This governance authority would have the powers and responsibilities needed to plan, launch, and sustain a medical school, from hiring faculty and staff, to establishing fair employment and labor practices, to issuing financing instruments that enable long-term investment in medical education. Importantly, the bill also subjects the authority to the state's open meeting and public records laws, ensuring transparency, accountability, and community involvement throughout the process.

AB 1852 builds on the progress made through earlier legislation, including the establishment of the UC Kern County Medical Education Endowment Fund (AB 2357 - Bains, 2024). Taken together, these

efforts demonstrate the Legislature's recognition that the San Joaquin Valley urgently needs a stable, long-term pipeline of healthcare professionals trained in and committed to serving our communities.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors strongly supports AB 1852 and urges swift passage by your committee. We appreciate your leadership and partnership in addressing the critical healthcare provider shortages that have impacted our region for far too long and thank you for your continued commitment to improving healthcare access for Kern County and the San Joaquin Valley.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phillip Peters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange