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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**H. R.**

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To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to limit the geographic  
reclassification of certain hospitals under the Medicare program.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. TAYLOR introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to limit  
the geographic reclassification of certain hospitals under  
the Medicare program.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Defend Rural Health  
5       Act of 2026”.

1   **SEC. 2. LIMITING GEOGRAPHIC RECLASSIFICATION OF**  
2                   **HOSPITALS UNDER MEDICARE.**

3                   (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1886(d)(8)(E) of the So-  
4   cial Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(8)(E)) is amend-  
5   ed—

6                   (1) in clause (i), by striking “described in  
7   clause (ii)” and inserting “that is located in an  
8   urban area (as defined in paragraph (2)(D)) and  
9   meets any of the criteria described in subclause (I),  
10   (II), or (IV) of clause (ii) (or, with respect to a hos-  
11   pital submitting such an application before October  
12   1, 2026, meets any of the criteria described in such  
13   clause);

14                   (2) in clause (ii)—

15                   (A) in the matter preceding subclause (I),  
16   by striking “a subsection (d) hospital” and all  
17   that follows through “criteria:” and inserting  
18   “the criteria described in this clause are the fol-  
19   lowing:”; and

20                   (B) in subclause (II)—

21                   (i) by inserting “that is” before “des-  
22   gnated by any law”; and

23                   (ii) by inserting “, and that was so  
24   designated as of January 1, 2026” before  
25   the period at the end; and

3        “(iii) No subsection (d) hospital shall be treated as  
4 being located in a rural area of a State under this sub-  
5 paragraph on or after October 1, 2029, regardless of any  
6 application described in clause (i) submitted prior to Octo-  
7 ber 1, 2026, unless such hospital demonstrates to the Sec-  
8 retary (in a form and manner specified by the Secretary)  
9 that such hospital meets any of the criteria described in  
10 subclause (I), (II), or (IV) of clause (ii).”.

11 (b) PROHIBITING DUAL RECLASSIFICATIONS  
12 THROUGH THE MEDICARE GEOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION  
13 REVIEW BOARD.—Section 1886(d)(10)(D) of the Social  
14 Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(10)(D)) is amend-  
15 ed—

16 (1) in clause (v), by striking “Any decision”  
17 and inserting “Subject to clause (viii), any decision”;  
18 and

19 (2) by adding at the end the following new  
20 clauses:

21       “(vii) Such guidelines shall provide that the Board  
22 may not approve an application described in subparagraph  
23 (C)(i) submitted by a subsection (d) hospital requesting  
24 a change in geographic classification for a fiscal year be-  
25 ginning on or after October 1, 2026, if such hospital is

1 treated as being located in a rural area under paragraph  
2 (8)(E) for such fiscal year.

3       “(viii) With respect to a fiscal year beginning on or  
4 after October 1, 2026, no change in the geographic classi-  
5 fication of a subsection (d) hospital that would otherwise  
6 be in effect for such fiscal year pursuant to a decision of  
7 the Board shall be effective for any portion of such fiscal  
8 year during which such hospital is treated as being located  
9 in a rural area under paragraph (8)(E).”.