OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 29 2024

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

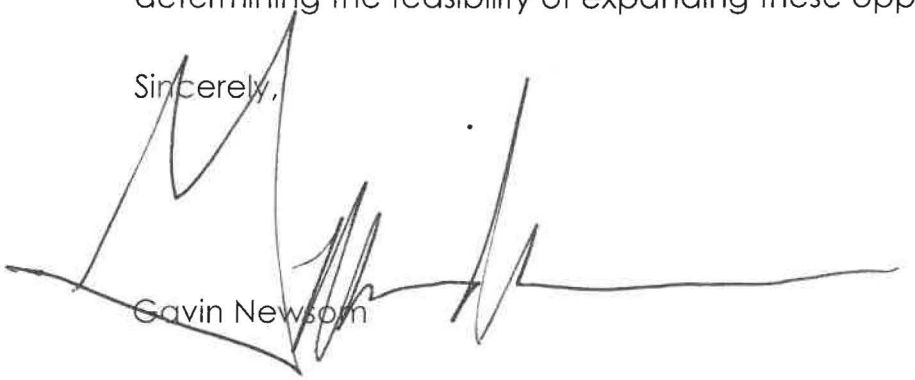
I am signing Assembly Bill 2357, which establishes the University of California (UC) Kern County Medical Education Endowment Fund for the purposes of supporting the operating costs associated with establishing a branch campus of the existing UC Medical School in Kern County.

Efforts to expand opportunities for medical education in the Central Valley are underway, thanks to significant investments made in partnership with this Legislature. Most recently, the 2024 Budget Act provided a $14.5 million ongoing General Fund to create a UC Merced medical school, which has been in the planning process for more than a decade. This new investment is on top of the $15 million in ongoing funding provided in the 2020 Budget Act, to support the UC San Francisco (UCSF) School of Medicine, Fresno Partnership Branch. Students participating in this program will receive a baccalaureate degree from UC Merced and a Doctor of Medicine from UCSF Fresno.

I agree with the author that providing educational opportunities in medically underserved areas is an important strategy for reducing physician shortages and for economic development. Given the significant cost pressures associated with developing, sustaining, and operating a new medical school, the state and its resources should first focus on implementing the current medical education expansion projects in the Central Valley. This bill is intended to draw in

philanthropic dollars, and can complement the state's efforts, including determining the feasibility of expanding these opportunities to Kern County.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom