



Senate Bill 216
CustomEyes Family Optometry
Written Proponent Testimony
4/25/2016

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chairman Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 216. My name is Dr. Christine Bowman, OD and I am the President of CustomEyes Family Optometry, a vendor of prescriptive eyewear located in Lancaster, Ohio. Our company has 4 employees and has been in business since 2006.

I urge your support of Senate Bill 216. SB 216 is an important bill that will make a positive difference for Ohio-based optical manufacturers, retailers and most of all to Ohio residents. It is estimated that as many as 75% of Ohio residents require vision correction. Economic barriers, like the sales tax, make it less likely for patients to obtain the care and medical products they need to be successful in school, obtain employment and maintain a good quality of life. This is especially troubling for low-income Ohioans for whom the sales tax on prescriptive eyewear is a regressive tax.

Senate Bill 216 will help recognize the importance of optical aids for Ohio residents by treating the purchase of these essential items similar to other medical devices. Optical aids are one of the few remaining medical devices which are still subject to Ohio's sales tax and are the only medical devices available for purchase in a retail setting that are taxed. Creating the limited exemption, as proposed in SB 216, will make it more likely that Ohio residents can obtain these essential medical items.

Finally, SB 216 will make Ohio more competitive in the marketplace for prescriptive eyewear. Ohio based doctors' offices, large and small retailers, federally qualified health centers and other optical dispensaries will finally find a level playing field compared to counterparts in other states. Nearly every other state exempts prescriptive eyewear from sales tax, including our neighbors Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 216. Please do not hesitate to contact me at customeyesoptometry@gmail.com or 614-519-5440 should you have questions or require additional information. Thank you for your consideration.