

House Bill 116
Proponent Testimony of Dr. Jason Miller
Owner, EyeCare Professionals of Powell

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 116. My name is Dr. Jason Miller and I am an optometrist in private practice at EyeCare Professionals of Powell. I am a graduate of the Ohio State University College of Optometry and hold a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Ohio Dominican University. I also serve as an adjunct faculty member at the OSU College of Optometry and am a past president of the Ohio Optometric Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 116.

House Bill 116 is an important bill for a number of reasons. As a doctor and vision material retailer, Ohio's sales tax and the inconsistency of the collection of the use tax places our office, and other small business optometric practices, at a competitive disadvantage. HB 116 will help protect Ohio's small business optometric practices and other bricks-and-mortar retailers in the state by allowing us to compete in the marketplace with retailers who are not required to collect sales tax.

However, the most important reason why the legislature should pass House Bill 116, is its impact on access to necessary medical devices for our most vulnerable populations. As a primary vision care provider for over 20 years, I have seen first-hand how these barriers impact patients. Children's educational experience, emotional well-being, and ultimately life trajectory are positively impacted by having the necessary glasses to simply see and read, both clearly and comfortably. Ohio's senior population also deserves cost-effective access to vision care and corrective lenses. In my practice, I see patients whose opportunity to live independently hinges on their ability to maintain the required visual acuity for their driver's license renewal and navigation of public transit. Good vision is also necessary for orientation and mobility. Uncorrected refractive error and ill-fitting glasses increase the likelihood of a fall in the elderly population.

The vast majority of us will require vision correction at some point in our lives. Economic barriers, such as the imposition of a sales tax on an essential medical device, make it more difficult for vulnerable patients to obtain the care and medical products they need.

An additional factor related to access is the adequacy of our healthcare workforce. We are fortunate in Ohio to have one of the nation's premier colleges of optometry. The Ohio State University College of Optometry is consistently regarded as one of the nation's top institutions in our profession and it produces around 60 new graduates each year. Our challenge is trying to ensure that those new graduates remain in Ohio after their training, open businesses here and treat Ohioans. A state's business climate, including laws related to insurance regulation, scope of practice and taxes factor heavily with these new graduates. Ohio is out-of-step with the majority of the country in how it handles the sale of prescription eyewear. This places Ohio at a

disadvantage when trying to recruit these new graduates to remain in our state. House Bill 116 can remove that impediment and help ensure that we have an adequate workforce to address Ohioans' future vision care needs.

In closing, I urge you to support House Bill 116. It is an important bill that will make a significant difference to Ohio residents, especially those who are most vulnerable. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.