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House Bill 116
Terri A. Gossard, O.D., M.S.
Written Proponent Testimony
4/21/17

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 116. My name is Dr. Terri Gossard and I am the Executive Director for the ECP Network, a subsidiary of Diversified Ophthalmics, a manufacturer of prescriptive eyewear located in Cincinnati, Ohio. Our company employs 185 employees and has been in business since 1977.

I urge your support of House Bill 116 as it 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 percent 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.

House Bill 116 will help recognize the importance of optical aids for Ohio residents by treating the purchase of these essential items similarly 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 HB 116, will make it more likely that Ohio residents can obtain these essential medical items.

Finally, HB 116 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. The vast majority of other states exempt 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 House Bill 116. Please do not hesitate to contact me at drgossard@ecpnetwork.com or (513) 910-9433 should you have questions or require additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Terri A. Gossard, O.D., M.S.
ECP Network Executive Director