



May 10, 2017

The Honorable Robert Hackett  
Ohio Senate  
Statehouse  
Columbus, OH 43215

**RE: Sub HB 49-Budget Bill- State Vision Professionals Board-Sec. 4725.03**

Dear Senator Hackett:

I am writing on behalf of the Opticians Association of Ohio, the professional association for over 5,000 opticians and apprentices in Ohio, to express our **opposition** to the provision in the budget bill, Sub HB 49, which eliminates the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board and merges regulation of opticians into a newly created **State Vision Professionals Board**. Under the bill, the State Vision Professionals Board will also regulate optometrists and the Board will be comprised of 4 optometrists, 2 opticians and 1 public member.

Opticians and optometrists are two separately licensed health care professionals with different scopes of practice. Opticians interpret and dispense the eyewear prescriptions by optometrists and ophthalmologists. Opticians are independent practitioners who often work in competing practices from optometrists. **Granting optometry control over the regulation of opticians will create an anti-competitive environment for Ohio optical businesses.**

Opticians practice in a variety of settings and often own their own retail optical business. Opticians may also work in the private practice offices of optometrists or ophthalmologists and many are employed by large competing retail optical chains such as LensCrafters, Pearle Vision or Target Optical Brands.

Vesting control of opticians in a new Vision Professionals Board with majority control of optometrists will essentially vest optometrists with the interpretation, regulation and licensure of opticians. This will result in optometry control over the business of independent opticians and optical companies which will negatively impact optical businesses in Ohio that compete with optometry practices.

In addition, **no** efficiencies will be realized by eliminating the Optical Dispensers Board and creating a new Vision Professionals Board. The Optical Dispensers Board is not funded by GRF dollars but solely through licensure fees that are already competitively low.

**Opticians throughout Ohio urge you to restore balance, fairness and competitiveness by reinstating the Optical Dispensers Board as the Board to regulate opticians.** The public will be best served and protected by separate regulation of optometrists and opticians. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Lisa Rankin at 614-204-6705.

Sincerely,

Mark Glasper, Executive Director