



**Substitute House Bill 49-Operating Budget  
Opponent Testimony  
State Vision Professionals Board-Section 4725.03**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice-Chairwoman Manning, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony **opposing** the elimination of the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board and merging regulation of opticians into a newly created State Vision Professionals Board in Substitute House Bill 49. My name is Mark Glasper and I am the Executive Director of the Opticians Association of Ohio, the professional association for over 5,000 licensed opticians and apprentices in Ohio.

Under the bill, the State Vision Professionals Board will combine the regulation of optometrists and opticians and, despite the fact that there are only 2,500 optometrists in the state compared to 5,000 opticians and apprentices, the bill provides majority control to optometrists with a composition of 4 optometrists, 2 opticians and 1 public member. ***As optometrists and opticians are direct competitors in the marketplace for the sale of prescription eyewear, giving optometrists regulatory control over opticians will harm the marketplace, impair business practice and result in an anti-competitive business environment in Ohio.***

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. Many opticians are businesses entrepreneurs with their own optical practices and compete with optometrists for the sale of prescription eyewear. A significant number of opticians also work for the larger retail optical businesses, such as LensCrafters, Pearle Vision or Target Optical Brands, which directly compete with private optometry practices for eyewear business.

Granting optometrists regulatory control over the licensure of and interpretation of the scope of practice of opticians will result in restrictive regulations that stifle independent opticians and large retail competitors in favor of competing optometric practices. Combining optometrists and opticians under a single Board controlled by optometric competitors guarantees that conflict, antitrust and restraint of trade issues will arise. No public purpose is served by eliminating the Optical Dispensers Board and State Board of Optometry in an attempt to show consolidation into a single governing Vision Board. **What will be accomplished, though, will be a loss of jobs in Ohio, with higher eyewear costs for consumers resulting from less competition.**

In addition, no efficiencies will be realized by eliminating the Optical Dispensers Board and creating a new Vision 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. Thank you for your consideration.