



SPECIALTY EYE INSTITUTE

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Senate Bill 129

Written Testimony of Ronald N Brown Jr., M.D.

Specialty Eye Institute

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Dear Members of the Ohio Legislature,

My name is Dr. Ronald Brown Jr., M.D., and I am board certified ophthalmologist and have practiced as a cataract and refractive surgeon for 30 years in Toledo. I thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on Senate Bill 129, the Modernization of Optometric Practice.

This bill would allow optometrists to perform laser procedures such as YAG capsulotomy (removal of film that develops after cataract surgery), Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) for glaucoma, and Peripheral Laser Iridotomy for Angle Closure Glaucoma Suspects or for Angle Closure Glaucoma. The law would also allow for removal of benign lid lesions such as skin tags, styes, and cysts as well as eliminate the categories of prescribing pharmaceuticals.

As an ophthalmologist at Specialty Eye Institute, I value the partnerships between our profession and the profession of optometry. Our practice was built on the premise that we work with highly skilled and well-trained optometrists who are the primary care providers for eyes. They provide the highest care possible by managing advanced ocular disease and pre- and post-operative care, while the ophthalmologists provide cutting-edge advanced surgical care. Optometry and ophthalmology typically have a great relationship outside of politics and work together to provide a coordinated role in modern eye care. I've worked with hundreds of optometrists both in my office and in private practice over the past 30 years and have no doubt they would perform these additional procedures safely, as has been done in many other states.

Optometrists in Ohio are seeking in-office procedures, not operating room surgery, and it is misleading to imply optometric training would be lacking. With proper training building on skills already possessed by optometrists, I'm confident these procedures would be performed safely and effectively. If SB 129 passes, I would be comfortable delegating these procedures to the optometrists in the practice, so my availability would increase to perform high-demand advanced surgical procedures like cataract surgery and LASIK. Allowing skilled optometrists to perform these noninvasive procedures would increase access to care, especially in rural and underserved areas.

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As technology increases and ophthalmologists continue to learn new surgical techniques and procedures, the profession of optometry must also evolve. Due to retirement and lower numbers of ophthalmologists coming out of residency, there are not enough of us to meet the needs of the growth in the aging population. Patients now often wait months for a consultation to see me for cataract surgery, with no clear solution to the surgeon shortage in sight.

I support the reasonable changes to amend the scope of optometric practice as outlined in SB 129. I am confident the training required would ensure that optometrists would be prepared and the public protected. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'R' followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Ronald N Brown Jr., M.D.