

Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 129
Senate Health Committee
Mathew Wojcik, O.D.
April 24, 2024

Dear Members of the Ohio Legislature and Health Committees.

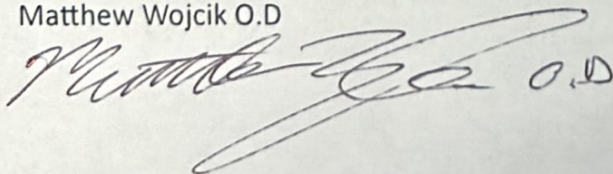
My name is Matthew Wojcik, and I am an optometrist that currently practices in Washington state. However, I spent the majority of my life growing up and living in Ohio. I received my undergraduate education from The University of Akron and then attended The Ohio State College of Optometry, graduating in 2022. As part of the curriculum at OSU I took a course covering the details of performing ophthalmic laser procedures and minor ophthalmic surgical techniques. That course sparked my interest in one day doing these procedures myself, but I knew I'd have to leave Ohio to do so. After graduating, I decided to pursue residency training instead of seeking full time employment. I matched a residency program in Kentucky, a state with an expanded scope of practice for optometrists that would allow me to build upon the skills I had learned as a student at OSU. I performed over 200 laser procedures and close to 50 minor eyelid procedures in one year as a resident at Bennett and Bloom Eye Center. My plan was always to go back to Ohio after residency as my whole family is there and it is the place I called home. After having the opportunity to work in Kentucky though, I realized I did not want to practice in a state where my clinic responsibilities would be diminished due to state laws. I instead moved across the country to Washington, where a new scope expansion law just passed. The practice I now work for also has a location in Alaska, another expanded scope state, and I'm currently in the process of obtaining a license there as well.

Throughout my time practicing in Kentucky, I witnessed many different optometrists safely and effectively perform a variety of ophthalmic laser procedures and minor eyelid surgeries. After proper training I also began to perform these same procedures. The majority of what I was doing was YAG laser posterior capsulotomies, selective laser trabeculoplasties (SLT), and chalazion excisions (benign lid lesion). Complication rates were low, and it provided increased access to care for patients living in the rural communities that we served.

I'm writing this letter to help gain your support for SB129. By voting for SB129 you are voting to help Ohio optometrists practice to the complete extent of their education. It would also support increased access to care across the state, especially for those located in rural areas. As a larger percentage of the population ages there will be a greater need for providers that can perform these procedures and Ohio optometrists are well equipped to take on that role.

Thank you for your consideration,

Matthew Wojcik O.D

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Wojcik O.D.", written over a light blue horizontal line.