



OHIO
OPTOMETRIC
ASSOCIATION

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Testimony Supporting Children's Vision Proposal
Substitute House Bill 96
Elizabeth Muckley, OD, FAAO,
Executive Director, The Ohio Optometric Association
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Chairman Cirino, Vice Chairman Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Dr. Elizabeth Muckley and on behalf of the primary eye care doctors that make up the Ohio Optometric Association, I would like to convey our appreciation of the Senate's continued support for the provision of crucial vision services for children through specific funding in the new substitute version of House Bill 96. The OOA and our charitable partner, the Ohio Optometric Foundation, continue to remain committed to eradicating the "unmet care gap" for school-age children who fail school vision screenings and who need a comprehensive eye exam to better their ability to learn in school.

Both the Optometric Association and Optometric Foundation truly appreciate the Senate's continued investment, for the third consecutive budget cycle, to support a proven public-private partnership with optometry that permits our doctors to take crucial vision services directly to children and families in communities throughout Ohio. The \$5 million dollar investment the Senate has proposed in Substitute House Bill 96 that is currently before this committee is truly appreciated. As our Doctors, Association and Foundation have proven in the past, your support for this project has and will continue to provide an incredible return on investment for your constituents.

When the OOA and our doctors began meeting with Senate members to discuss the budget and the Governor's proposed "OhioSee" initiative, we were heartened that Senators remembered and were already very familiar and supportive of the efforts of our doctors and foundation to provide comprehensive vision services to children in your communities through our longstanding "iSEE" program. The recognition of our Foundation's initiative that has a proven record of helping improve children's vision outcomes combined with the continued investment from the Senate will help Ohio's optometrists further our goal of bettering the lives of children in our state. This support from the state, coupled with our charity care, has produced measurable positive outcomes for students and their families. Through comprehensive examination, serious conditions such as amblyopia and significant refractive error have been detected. As a result, Ohio has become a national leader in addressing children's vision issues and the Senate's ongoing financial commitment to this effort will enable us to continue this important and necessary work.

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chairman Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testify today on behalf of the Ohio Optometric Association and our members. The OOA, the Ohio Optometric Foundation and our doctors are honored that the Senate supports our mission to improve children's vision in Ohio through financially investing in a mutually beneficial public-private partnership that has and will continue to produce measurable results in your communities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or our Legislative Counsel, Dan Leite and Courtney Saunders of Capitol Advocates, on any issues that might arise during testimony or debate on HB 96.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Muckley, O.D.
CEO & Executive Director, The Ohio Optometric Association