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## Proponent Testimony to the Ohio Senate Health Committee In Support of Senate Bill 36 Modernization of Optometric Practice

Neal A. Tolchin, MD, Board-Certified Ophthalmologist

February 18, 2025

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and esteemed members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Senate Bill 36 the Modernization of Optometric Practice.

My name is Dr. Neal A Tolchin, and I am a Board-Certified Ophthalmologist practicing in Toledo, Ohio.

Senate Bill 36 aims to proposes the scope of optometric practice by permitting optometrists to perform specific laser procedures and remove benign eyelid lesions. The procedures include YAG capsulotomy, Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT), and Peripheral Laser Iridotomy (LPI). These minimally invasive procedures are commonly conducted in office settings and are well-suited for optometrists with the appropriate training. Additionally, the bill allows for the removal of benign eyelid lesions such as styes, skin tags, and cysts—simple procedures that can be safely performed in a clinical environment. Importantly, it does not permit any operating room procedures such as cataract surgery, LASIK, or advanced oculoplastic eyelid surgeries.

As a practicing ophthalmologist for over 35 years, I have had the honor of collaborating with optometrists throughout Northwest Ohio to care for our patients. Optometrists are highly educated and skilled and extensively trained professionals who already manage a wide range of ocular diseases and collaborate effectively in co-managing patients with ophthalmologists. The notion that optometrists primarily measure visual acuity and prescribe corrective lenses does not reflect their full capabilities. I am confident that optometrists are fully capable of performing the procedures outlined in SB 36. As advancements in technology enable ophthalmologists to adopt new surgical techniques, the optometric profession should evolve in tandem.

Passing this legislation would decrease wait times for these office-based laser procedures, alleviate pressure on surgical schedules, and allow

ophthalmologists to focus on more complex surgical interventions—particularly as Ohio's aging population drives increased demand for eye care services. For example, the current wait time in my practice for a surgical appointment is too long, highlighting the need for expanded access to care.

I support the reasonable updates to the scope of optometric practice proposed in SB 36. I am confident that optometrists will be well-prepared to provide these services safely and effectively, ensuring the protection of public health and safety.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Neal Tolchin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Neal A. Tolchin  
Board-Certified Ophthalmologist  
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