

Testimony Supporting SB 36  
Andrew Hoffman, OD  
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Dear Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Senate Health Committee:

My name is Dr. Andrew Hoffman, and I am a doctor of optometry practicing in Hicksville, OH. I currently reside in Fort Wayne, IN and upon graduation from Indiana University School of Optometry in 2010, I began working in an optometry practice located in New Haven, IN. In 2011, I purchased my own independent private practice office in Hicksville, OH where I began working 2-3 days a week while continuing to work as an employee for 2 days/week in New Haven, IN.

I appreciate your service to the state of Ohio and the time you take to hear all sides when it comes to health care reform and scope expansions. I am asking for your support for SB 36, which would allow doctors of optometry in Ohio the ability to perform a YAG capsulotomy after cataract surgery, Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) and Laser Peripheral Iridotomy (LPI) both for glaucoma, as well as perform removal of benign eyelid “lumps and bumps”. I would like to provide you information as an eye care provider who practices in 2 states with different optometric scopes of practices.

In 2019, Indiana statutes allowed doctors of optometry to be trained and certified to perform the procedures outlined in SB 36. At the time, optometry students currently enrolled at Indiana University were already graduating with this certification and training, but the majority of practicing doctors of optometry in Indiana needed to take the laser and minor procedures certification course that was originally developed in Oklahoma, the first state to allow doctors of optometry to perform these procedures. This is also the course that is widely accepted as the gold standard for optometric laser and minor procedures certification for 30 years throughout the country. Please see the submitted written testimony from Dr. Nate Lighthizer, Dean and Professor at the Northeastern State University College of Optometry in Oklahoma outlining the depth, curriculum, and safety of the certification course.

In Aug of 2019, I attended this rigorous certification course at the Indiana University School of Optometry. I know a 32- hour course can sound minimal to those not in medicine, but the course expands upon the expertise doctors of optometry have learned over years of caring for patients pre and post operatively as well as the everyday use of focusing microscopes. All licensed medical professionals take courses like this when learning new procedures or techniques. These courses are intense and credentialed by our governing bodies and state licensing agencies.

The course includes lectures on the basic science of laser and eyelid procedures including a review of benign vs. malignant eyelid lesion identification, sterile techniques, the setup of the laser equipment for each procedure, and the review of expected outcomes and potential complications for each procedure. I spent time performing these laser procedures at the supervision of instructors using simulated model eyes. These test eyes are very realistic and give a genuine sensation of the actual procedures themselves. Lastly, I took a written examination which *required*

an 80% or higher to pass, followed by three laser practical exams in the afternoon. Each laser practical exam was observed by a clinician and graded on set up, efficiency, and outcome of each procedure. After becoming certified in the State of Indiana, it then takes time to get Medicare and other insurers to recognize optometry as a provider of these services. As a result, my colleague and I purchased a laser in 2021 and performed our 1<sup>st</sup> YAG Laser Capsulotomy on June 9, 2021.

Prior to 2021, referring my Ohio patients to ophthalmology colleagues for YAGs, SLTs, or LPIs required a 1-2 month waiting period for the initial consultation and another month until the procedure was scheduled due to the backlog of their schedules. Since becoming laser certified in Indiana in 2021, I refer all my Ohio patients to my New Haven, IN office where the wait time for surgery is no more than 2 wks.

In that time, I personally performed 161 YAG capsulotomies. My colleague has performed 250 YAGS, 69 SLTs, and 23 LPIs. We have had no complications whatsoever and only the expected outcomes of the respective surgeries. Of the 503 laser procedures performed, 108 were residents of Ohio that I referred over to Indiana for care. It is unfortunate to refer patients to another state when I am trained to perform these procedures because the state statute is the barrier to providing this care to my Ohio patients. Patients do not understand when I tell them I can't do this procedure in Ohio because of the law, but I can in Indiana. It makes no sense to them since my training is the same no matter where I practice.

By supporting SB 36, you are allowing Ohio patients to have these procedures performed in their local, trusted doctor of optometry's office, in a timelier manner, and allowing ophthalmologists to focus on more advanced, specialized surgical care. While I was not trained in laser procedures during my time at Indiana School of Optometry, the rigorous certification course offered was more than enough to prepare me for performing these procedures.

Chairman Huffman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 36. I will now turn it over to Dr. Mike Earley, our last witness, and then can address any questions you may have.