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House Bill 110  
Interested Party Testimony  
Dr. Shane Foster  
President-Elect, Ohio Optometric Association  
April 15, 2021

Chairman Oelslager, members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on House Bill 110, the proposed state operating budget for fiscal years 2022-23. My name is Dr. Shane Foster and I am an optometrist from Southeastern Ohio. I own and operate Athens Eye Care, which has locations in Athens and Logan. I am the President-Elect of the Ohio Optometric Association (OOA), which represents 70% of the state's Doctors of Optometry, and I serve as the President of the OOA's charitable arm, the Ohio Optometric Foundation. I am here today to ask for your support of a unique mobile vision care program that will benefit children and families in the Appalachian region of Ohio by improving access to eye exams and glasses for students.

The OOA and our Foundation, have partnered with the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO) and school-based mobile vision care experts, Vision To Learn (VTL), to develop a mobile vision clinic program, called iSee with Vision To Learn, which will serve the 32 county Appalachian region of our state. The program seeks to help meet the needs for improved access to vision care services in the region and will deliver more than 2,500 eye exams and over 2,000 new prescription glasses annually. Additionally, the program will help families develop relationships with local vision care professionals to ensure a continuity of care for students.

The need for improved access to vision care services for Ohio children is significant, especially in our Appalachian areas. In 2016, the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio surveyed school nurses throughout the region and found "the greatest challenge [to students getting the glasses they need] is getting families to follow-up on referrals for a vision exam." Additionally, a recent Ohio Department of Health report detailed that over 77% of students who are identified as having potential vision problems through a vision screening, do not receive the recommended eye exam from a vision care professional. This is unacceptable. Our partnership is aimed at addressing this major problem and helping build a bridge to a lifetime of comprehensive eye care for students, which has potential benefits in education, overall health and other areas of life.

We are asking for your help by supporting an amendment to HB 110 that would make an appropriation to the Pay for Success Fund within the State Treasurer's ResultsOhio program. The iSee with Vision To Learn project was recently deemed by the State Treasurer as a "Pay for Success Ready" program but it was not certified with this distinction before the initial deadline of budget amendments to HB 110, which is why this funding request is being made at this time.



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For your review, I have attached additional details on the iSee with Vision To Learn program, the Treasurer's ResultsOhio Feasibility Study outline on the project and drafted amendment language.

On behalf of the OOA, thank you for considering our request and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.