



# AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

## Memorandum of Opposition

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**DATE:** February 4, 2016  
**TO:** Honorable Members of the Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee  
**FROM:** Dr. Steven A. Loomis, President, American Optometric Association (AOA)  
**RE:** Senate Bill 1576 OPPOSE

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On behalf of the American Optometric Association (AOA), I would like to communicate our strong opposition to Senate Bill 1576, currently assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee and scheduled for a hearing on Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>.

SB 1576 is a detrimental piece of legislation that would negatively impact the vision health of tens of thousands of Oregon families. Contact lenses are medically regulated devices, regulated by the Food and Drug Administration for important reasons. They necessarily must be selected and fitted by an eye doctor.

Nearly 1 million health care visits and an added \$175 million in healthcare costs each year are due directly to complications that arise from the improper dispensing and use of contact lenses. SB 1576 effectively disrupts the critical doctor patient relationship by putting patient care secondary to the commercial interests of some out of state on-line retailers.

SB 1576 stands in stark contrast to what a large majority of patients prescribed contact lenses have said publicly. In an August 2015 Public Opinion Strategies poll, almost 75% of contact lens wearers stated they find it riskier to purchase these medically regulated devices from an online retailer rather than from their local optometrist. Furthermore, 93% of contact lens wearers stated that their family eye doctor was the best source of information when it came to caring for contact lenses and preventing related eye health problems.

The AOA fully supports patient choice in the purchase of contact lenses from any legitimate source and understands the time and fiscal restraints associated with these medically regulated devices. This is why local, qualified optometric doctors continue to be the overwhelming choice for patients who wear contact lenses.

Accordingly, the American Optometric Association **OPPOSES SB 1576** and would ask for your **NO VOTE ON SB 1576** in the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Tuesday, February 8. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact AOA's Director of State Government Relations, Daniel Carey, at [dcarey@aoa.org](mailto:dcarey@aoa.org) or 703-837-1343.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.A. Loomis".

Steven A. Loomis, O.D.  
President, American Optometric Association