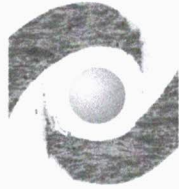


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EYE CENTER OF BROOKINGS, LLC .

February 11, 2021

**House Health Care committee
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court Street NE, H-489
Salem, OR 97301**

Chair Prusak and members of the House Committee on Health Care:

For the record my name is Dr. Douglas Walker. I am an Optometric Physician in private practice in remote Curry County metropolis of Brookings, Oregon for the past 22 years. I'm a 1999 graduate of Pacific University College of Optometry, I am a member and past president of the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association (OOPA) and I'm currently a Board Member and past president of the Oregon Board of Optometry (OBO). To be clear, my testimony today is in favor of HB 2541. In addition, my testimony represents myself as an individual and not as a representative of the Oregon Board of Optometry.

PRACTICE

I chose to practice Optometry in rural Oregon. I chose to live and raise my family in rural Oregon. I chose to provide the best possible eye care to my community and embrace the true calling of service in my profession, Rotary, and the Chamber of Commerce. Just like all of you on this committee, I have a great desire to serve. HB 2541 will help provide additional services to my community in Brookings. Our closest Oregon eye surgeons are 100 miles away. Yes, there are issues of access, affordability, and timeliness of care. Oregon Optometric physicians, such as myself, are requesting you to help us provide this care to our patients.

OBO SERVICE

I was appointed by the Governor to the Oregon Board of Optometry to which I have served 6 years as a Board member and past president. The Oregon Board of Optometry is comprised of five (5) Oregon Optometric Physicians and one (1) public member. The Board is administered by an Executive Director and Executive Assistant along with an assigned Assistant Attorney General.

When I was first appointed by Governor Kate Brown and confirmed by the Senate to the Oregon Board of Optometry in 2015, I took and subscribed the oath of office required by the Oregon Constitution. Like my professional optometry oath, I have taken very seriously the commitment to ensuring the continuation of education of Oregon Optometric Physicians for the protection, safety and wellbeing of the public. Continuing education is required to maintain and advance the professional skills and abilities of optometric physicians in the application and use of new techniques, scientific and clinical advances and the achievement of research to ensure expansive and comprehensive care to the public.

With the passing of HB 2541 the Oregon Board of Optometry will have the responsibility to regulate and confirm certification of Optometric Physicians in Oregon as they have done since 1905. The Oregon Board of Optometry will look to the Association or Regulatory Boards of Optometry and other states with similar statutes for guidance.

There are 841 optometric physicians licensed in Oregon.

In the past three years: 118 cases were opened of which 10 cases are still open. The majority of cases were closed with either no optometric error or no discipline. During the past three years there was only one case of gross ignorance or inefficiency and one case due to untimely records release. There have been no malpractice reports over the past three years.

During my past 22 years in this profession, and even more apparent during my tenure as a member of the Oregon Board of Optometry, I have a great respect, admiration and pride in Oregon optometric physicians as mature, knowledgeable and skilled professionals who work harmoniously with other health providers to maintain and improve the lives of Oregonians. With the passing of HB 2541, Oregon Optometric Physicians will have the privilege to practice to the full extent of their training

Thank you for your consideration Chair Prusak and committee members. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have at any time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Douglas Walker".

Douglas Walker, OD
Optometric Physician
Brookings, Oregon