

Rep. Rachel Prusak, Chair  
Rep. Cedric Hayden, Vice-Chair  
Rep. Andrea Salinas, Vice-Chair

Members of the House Health Care Committee

I am a practicing ophthalmologist (with subspecialty training in oculoplastic, reconstructive and orbital surgery) at EyeHealth Northwest. As one of Oregon's premier eye care providers, EyeHealth Northwest employs both ophthalmologist and optometric providers who work together to provide safe and effective care to Oregonians. I am writing to express my significant concerns about HB 2541.

Over the past 7-8 years of my career, I have had the opportunity to work closely and collaborate with well trained and capable optometrists from all over the country who provide exceptional primary eye care to their patients. Their value to the health care system in delivery of primary eye care is not to be understated. Simultaneously, we must not understate the importance of obtaining the proper training required to safely perform ophthalmic surgery and effectively manage surgical complications. This comprehensive and demanding training is obtained at a minimum through medical school (4 years), internship (1 year) and residency (3 years). A majority of residency graduates then pursue an additional 1-2 years of subspecialty surgical training.

It is my concern that HB 2541 compromises patient safety by allowing optometrists, without the requisite surgical training, to perform surgery via the use of a scalpel, laser, cautery, cryotherapy, and / or ionizing radiation. This circumvents the rigorous training required of a surgeon. While any surgeon would readily admit that certain procedures are accompanied by greater surgical risk than others, we must not mistake a low risk procedure for one with no risk. The consequences of severe complications from even the lowest risk laser or incisional surgery can be vision threatening and life altering. Even a low risk procedure suddenly becomes a much higher risk one in the hands of someone who is unprepared or inadequately trained.

In my view, this bill threatens patient safety and undermines the integrity of our medical system in assuring a high standard of surgical care.

Please vote NO on HB 2541.

Respectfully,  
Bryce Radmall, MD