



Ohio Sunset Review Committee

Testimony Specific to Merging the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board

and the Ohio State Board of Optometry

February 23, 2016

Chairman Jordan and members of the Ohio Sunset Review Committee, my name is Mark Glasper and I am the Executive Director of the Opticians Association of Ohio. I am here to testify as a proponent of maintaining the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board as the Board to regulate Ohio opticians. One of the charges of this Committee is to consider whether the Optical Dispensers Board and the State Board of Optometry should be merged. The OAO opposes consolidating the Optical Dispensers Board and the State Board of Optometry for many reasons.

Opticians are licensed health professionals who fit eyeglasses and dispense contact lenses using prescriptions written by ophthalmologists and optometrists. They interpret prescriptions, educate the patient on the use and care of the product and adhere to safe practice standards. Licensed opticians are independent practitioners who work with retailers, optometrists, and ophthalmologists. They are not dependent practitioners nor do they practice solely with optometrists. Opticians are currently regulated by the Optical Dispensers Board, which has been funded solely through licensure and registration fees since 1979 and without funding from the General Revenue Fund.

In addition to being a self-sustaining Board, the Optical Dispensers Board demonstrates numerous efficiencies. It utilizes a staff of only three individuals to regulate 3,117 opticians and register 1,521 apprentices. The Board has also implemented an online license renewal system for both licensees and apprentices, resulting in a 98% online renewal rate. Lower licensure fees are unlikely to result from any Board consolidation as Ohio is already competitive with other states with a \$50 initial license fee and \$100 renewal fee for opticians. No other state has delegated licensure of opticians to the State Board of Optometry. I have also provided a letter from the Opticians Association of America regarding its opposition to a merger of the two Boards and their reasoning.

As the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board is solely funded through licensure and registration fees and maintains high efficiency, we respectfully request that you recommend it continue to be the Board that regulates Ohio opticians and protects the public by doing so.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.