

February 8, 2021

Dear Senator and Representative,

I am writing in opposition to HB 2541 and to urge you to vote no on this bill. The bill allows optometrists to perform eye surgery which greatly increases the medical risk to patients undergoing these procedures. I practiced ophthalmology in Oregon and performed many eye surgeries. On three occasions, each totally unpredicted and unexpected, my patient suffered a cardiac and/or pulmonary arrest during the procedure. Fortunately, all recovered safely following immediate, expert CPR by the surgeon and surgical team of additional MDs and nurses. Clearly, eye surgery, seemingly routine and limited in scope, may involve much more than the eye as these three cases taught me. They have the potential for a catastrophic medical outcome. The surgeon, at an unexpected moment, may need to call upon his most advanced critical-care medical training and expertise. Patients who consent to surgery, are relying on the totality of their surgeon's medical training, experience and capabilities, and not simply a brief technical course on an ocular procedure. Ocular surgery is a medical procedure with potential medical as well as ocular complications. Any surgeon attempting ocular surgery is undertaking responsibility for the entirety of the patient's medical status, a responsibility not limited to just the patient's eye. This responsibility is a medical one for which MDs have been trained and in which MDs have hands-on, medical experience. This cannot be learned in a brief course. It is

the subject of medical school, internship, residency and subspecialty training. Patients undergoing an eye operation have the expectation that their surgeon has the expertise, training and experience to get them safely through the operation, regardless of what may occur. This is the role of MDs. I urge you to vote no on HB2541. Ocular surgery is a medical procedure with medical risks. It should be performed by medical doctors. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

James R. Waldman, MD
Portland, OR