

PO Box 4005
937K Chetco Avenue
Brookings,OR 97415



541-469-6923
fax: 541-469-6790
e-mail: dr_doug_walker@hotmail.com

EYE CENTER OF BROOKINGS, LLC .

February 8, 2021

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

Dear Chair Prusak and House Health Care Committee:

I write you today in support of HB2541. This bill allows Doctors of Optometry, to practice to their highest level of education and training. Updating certain statutory provisions, while removing other unnecessary barriers in state law for Doctors of Optometry, is critical in keeping up with the rigorous education and clinical training that primary eye and vision care providers receive today. Ultimately, these updates will provide greater access in the healthcare marketplace for patients to better receive the timely, qualified and often critical care they need.

With an aging population, the number of vision related problems in the U.S. are projected to increase by an astounding 65% in the coming years. Without updating the scope of practice for optometric physicians, 99.9% of the population with direct access to optometric vision care is denied access to high-quality care in Oregon communities and must incur the added expense of referrals to specialists whose offices are often significant distances away and/or result in long wait times between office visits.

Currently, five states - Alaska, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Oklahoma, permit ophthalmic surgical procedures, YAG laser capsulotomy and trabeculoplasty, under their scope of practice acts. Taking this into account and stretching as far back as 1998 in the case of Oklahoma, there have been no malpractice judgements against optometrists related to these procedures or those proposed in HB2541.

It is for the reasons listed above that I support Doctors of Optometry practicing to their full educational authority. Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Douglas Walker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

**Douglas Walker, O.D.
Optometric Physician**