



February 8, 2021

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

Dear House Health Care Committee:

I am writing you today in support of [HB2541](#). This bill allows optometric physicians to practice to their highest level of education & training. Updating certain statutory provisions, while removing other unnecessary barriers in the current state law is critical in keeping up with the rigorous education, training and care advancements made over the last 20 years. Ultimately, these updates will provide greater access in the healthcare marketplace for patients to better receive timely & appropriate care.

At present, 85% of primary eye care is provided by optometric physicians. 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 modernizing this practice act, 99.9% of the population with direct access to care from optometric physicians are unduly denied access to high-quality eye care in our Oregon communities. Thereby, they incur added expenses, significant travel, and often long wait times between office visits. Unnecessary duplication of care and the resulting lost time from work, school or other daily obligations for our citizens presents an opportunity for Oregon to do better, and we must. In 2018, a US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) report concluded, "States should consider changes to their scope of practice statutes to allow all health care providers to practice to the top of their license, utilizing their full skill set."

Currently, five states - Alaska, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Oklahoma, permit ophthalmic surgical procedures, YAG laser capsulotomy and trabeculectomy, 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 judgments against optometric physicians related to these procedures or those proposed in [HB2541](#).

As a legislated profession, our ability to manage these conditions appropriately requires occasional modernization to reflect changes that are occurring thanks to health care research, technological advancements and clinical successes. In this moment, both technology and training have changed such that it is time for updates reflecting these improvements in Oregon's statutes.

For the above reasons, I support [HB2541](#). I thank you 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 cursive that reads "Dr. Nathaniel Roland".

Optometric Physician

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