



May 12, 2025

The Honorable Donna Bailey and Honorable Kristi Mathieson
Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
c/o Legislative Information Office
Maine State House
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Chairs Bailey and Mathieson and Members of the Committee,

We write to you as current Doctor of Optometry students and representatives of all 26 optometry schools in North America. Together we make up the Board of Trustees and the Executive Council of the American Optometric Student Association (AOSA) which represents more than 6,000 student members. We strongly support the Maine optometric scope expansion legislation, LD 1803.

During our four years of optometry school, we will complete more than 10,000 hours of didactic and clinical post-graduate training focused on the eye, its components, medical treatment options, and the more than 270 systemic diseases that manifest in the eye including diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.

Upon graduation, our priority will be to begin the search for which state we will serve patients as primary healthcare providers. Many of us will go on to become small business owners and create jobs in the state we choose to make our home.

As we look for opportunities in states across the country, a significant consideration will be given to which state allows us to practice to the fullest extent of our education, certification, and training. Although Maine offers many positive attributes like diverse populations and an abundance of recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities, current Maine law does not allow us to offer certain laser procedures, of which we will be trained and certified to perform upon graduation.

During the 132nd legislative session, Maine has the opportunity to pass LD 1803, which allows optometrists to perform certain in-office, non-invasive, minor laser procedures to treat glaucoma and after-cataract surgery care. These procedures have been performed more than 100,000 times by optometrists, also recognized as doctors of optometry, in other states—but in Maine can only be completed by ophthalmologists and non-eye care advanced practice providers.

According to the American Optometric Association, optometrists provide 85% of primary eye health care in the United States. And in more than 10,000+ U.S. communities, doctors of optometry are the only eye care providers. We urge you to support LD 1803, which will improve care for your constituents, make Maine more attractive to new optometry graduates, and ensure patients receive the highest quality eye and vision care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'James Chung'.

James Chung
2025-2026 President, American Optometric Student Association (AOSA)
Third-Year Student, The Ohio State University College of Optometry

James Chung
American Optometric Student Association
LD 1803

Letter in support of LD1803 attached.