

May 9, 2025

The Honorable Donna Bailey and Kristi Mathieson
Chairs, Health Coverage, Insurance
and Financial Services Committee
Room 333
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

RE: L.D. 1803 (S.P. 702)

Dear Senator Bailey and Representative Kristi Mathieson:

On behalf of the more than 90,000 members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the over 370 members of the Maine Chapter of the ACS, we are writing to formally oppose L.D. 1803 (S.P. 702) which dramatically increases the scope of practice for optometrists in medicine and surgery.

The ACS has a strong history of addressing matters relating to patient care and safety and there are grave concerns in expanding surgical scope of practice for healthcare professionals who lack the years of education, clinical training, and expertise of a board-certified surgeon. If passed, L.D. 1803 (S.P. 702) will allow optometrists to perform delicate surgical procedures around the eye without requiring them to undergo the years of education and clinical training to provide safe, quality care for your constituents.

Allowing optometrists to perform ophthalmic surgery drastically lowers the standard of care in Maine. While *optometrists* are practitioners educated and trained to diagnose eye conditions and treat basic vision problems, *ophthalmologists* are medical doctors who specialize in the care and surgical treatment of eye conditions. An optometrist taking a weekend training course does not compare to over a decade of medical education, residency, and fellowship programs an ophthalmologist must complete.

We urge the members of the Senate Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services to oppose L.D. 1803 (S.P. 702) allowing optometrists, who are non-physician practitioners, to perform ophthalmic surgery in Maine. The ACS and Maine Chapter of the ACS look forward to answering any questions you may have. We appreciate your consideration.

facs.org

Sincerely,

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cc: Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee and staff