



Mountain View EyeCare

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Testimony in Support of LD 1803

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and honorable members of the HCIFS Committee:

My name is Dr. Linda Cameron, and I'm a Doctor of Optometry in western Maine with offices in Rumford and Bethel. I went to Maine schools, graduating from Rumford High School and Bowdoin College. I received my doctorate from the New England College of Optometry in Boston. After graduation, I moved back home to Maine to start my career. And 28 years later, I still love being a doctor of optometry. I love helping people see their best. Having good eyesight makes everyday life easier, keeps you safe, helps you perform better at school and work, boosts your confidence and mood, and lets you enjoy the things you love.

Doctors of optometry are primary eye care providers, educated and trained to diagnose and manage a wide range of eye conditions. We prescribe glasses and contact lenses, treat eye infections and injuries, and manage eye diseases like glaucoma, macular degeneration, and dry eyes. In many cases, we are the first to detect these diseases. Comprehensive eye exams can catch early signs of serious health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, and more. The eye is the only part of the body where we can look directly at blood vessels without opening skin. If we see trouble with blood vessels in the eye, then that means there is probably trouble in the rest of the body. Optometrists play a crucial role in coordinating patient care when a referral is needed to an ophthalmologist or other specialists for complex procedures like cataract or retinal surgery.

Access to specialty eye care in rural Maine is challenging. The nearest ophthalmologists for my patients are an hour or more away, and in just the past month, that number went down by two. So the wait times for my patient referrals just got longer, and the average wait times were already 3-6 months out. When my patients ask, "Dr. Cameron, can't you do this for me? I can't drive myself; I don't have anyone to take me. I don't want to burden family to take time off from work." It's so hard to have to tell them, "I wish I could, but even though I have the education and training, I am not allowed to." Despite our extensive training and education, current laws limit the treatments we can provide—forcing many patients to endure unnecessary delays in care. These delays can lead to worsening vision, increased pain or discomfort, leading to other complications, like being unable to drive or go to work.

The optometry bill before you would allow trained optometrists to perform necessary procedures, improving timely access to care for Maine citizens. With the proper education and safeguards, doctors of optometry can safely and effectively expand the services we offer—just as they do in many other states. I urge you to support LD1803, ensuring that patients in Maine receive the timely, high-quality eye care they need, close to home. Thank you for your time and consideration.