

Support Emails for SB 55 Optometry

Compiled Feb. 20-24, 2015

Dear Senator Cathy Giessel,

Please support SB 55! SB 55 updates the Alaska Optometry statutes, allowing the board to determine the regulatory details of practice.

SB 55 places the details of the continuing education requirements back into regulation where they belong, as the Department indicated they desired many years ago.

SB 55 leaves the details of the current pharmaceutical prescribing authority up to the board, through regulation, as with the other prescribing professions. The bill does clearly prohibit injections into the vitreous body of the eye, which is done by specialty ophthalmologists.

SB 55 brings the definition of optometry into 2015. Optometrists are trained to perform far more advanced procedures than many years ago. The new definition clearly defines how optometrists are already practicing and allows the board the flexibility to assure protection of the public. And there is a section on limitations on practice which excludes any invasive surgery, and a section clearly defining all the excluded surgery reserved for ophthalmology, including laser PRK, even though many optometrists can perform this in a few other states, it is still prohibited in SB 55.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Rice, OD

Kenai, AK

Dear Senator Giessel,

My wife and I have practiced optometry in Fairbanks for the past fifteen years. We initially arrived in Alaska as an active duty family at Bassett Army hospital, but found that the kindness of the people that make up the community of Fairbanks encouraged us to make Alaska our home.

During our time serving the community of Fairbanks as optometrists we have always appreciated the Alaskan legislature's willingness to adjust the state's statutes to reflect the advances in technology available to our profession and the ever evolving scope of optometric practice. Optometrists provide the majority of primary eye care in our community and the increased scope of practice over the years has definitely improved our patients access to timely therapeutic intervention.

Thank you for supporting SB 55, as this bill would allow the Alaska Board of Optometry to regulate our continued education requirements and scope of medical prescribing to reflect the current advances in optometric education and technology. This bill would allow the board of optometry to insure proper protection of the public as is the case for many of the other board regulated professions in Alaska. We are blessed to practice in a state that has always recognized the advancements in optometric patient care.

Thank you,

Drs. Chad and Colleen Personett
Fairbanks, AK

Dear Ms. Conway:

As an optometrist with 26 years experience (20 in Alaska), I strongly support DROPPING the injections course requirement. We optometrists DO NOT DO INJECTIONS. It is a hostile requirement introduced to HARM optometry.

D J Kosterman OD

Sen. Giessel:

As an optometrist with 26 years experience (20 in Alaska), I strongly support the repeal of the requirement for a seven hours injection course. It is an unnecessary burden, unrelated to the actual practice of optometry.

Daniel Kosterman, OD

Senator Giessel and members of the Senate HSS committee,

I am asking for your support of SB 55.

This bill updates the Alaska Optometry statutes in several areas, making it similar to the dental and nurse practitioner statutes, whereas the board determines the regulatory details of practice. This allows more flexibility as technology advances thus avoiding repeated trips to the legislature to continue to patch together an almost 40 year old existing law in a profession that has changed immensely in even the past 10 years.

It places the details of the continuing education requirements back into regulation where they belong, as the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development indicated they desired many years ago.

Sincerely,

David Karpik, OD

Kenai Vision Center

Immediate Past President, Alaska Optometric Association.

From: Ladd Nolin <dr.nolin@alaskaeyecare.com>

Date: February 20, 2015 at 9:43:25 AM AKST

To: <Sen.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov>

Subject: HB55

Senator Cathy Giessel

February 19, 2015

Dear Senator Giessel,

I am writing to encourage your support of SB 55, which will improve access to eye care for Alaskans. It will be particularly valuable to those patients in rural areas.

Thank you for your support and hard work in the Senate!

Sincerely,

Ladd Nolin O.D.

From: victoria_blower@hotmail.com
To: sen.cathy.giessel@akleg.gov
Subject: SB 55
Date: Fri, 20 Feb 2015 16:56:52 -0900

February 20, 2015

Senator Giessel:

I am writing to ask you to please support SB 55.

This bill updates the Alaska Optometry Statute moving continuing education requirements back into regulation. Therefore allowing the Optometric board to determine the regulatory details of practice as other healthcare professions do. This I believe is also the desire of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development and will decrease administrative tasks for Occupational Licensing.

As our industry and federal drug schedules have changed over the years, and will continue to from time to time, it has been necessary to return to the legislature for statute changes. This seems an unnecessary burden placed on the legislature which could more effectively be handled by board regulation as with other prescribing professions.

SB 55 updates the optometry definition to reflect current education and training. Allowing for improvements in diagnostic and therapeutic procedures as they develop and as determined by the board while safeguarding the public by specifying that optometrists must be qualified for any procedures they perform. It clearly defines limitations on practice which prohibit surgical procedures under an "invasive surgery" definition.

Sincerely,

Victoria A. Blower, OD
Treasurer, Alaska Optometric Association

Victoria Blower, O.D.
Accurate Vision Clinic
Care as Personal as it is Effective
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Please support SB 55.

This bill updates the Alaska Optometry statutes in several areas, making it similar to the dental and nurse practitioner statutes, whereas the board determines the regulatory details of practice. This allows more flexibility as technology advances.

It places the details of the continuing education requirements back into regulation where they belong, as the Department indicated they desired many years ago. Current regulations already require 36 hours per license period, and the deleted hours shown are redundant and require unnecessary work for Occupational Licensing.

SB 55 leaves the details of the current pharmaceutical prescribing authority up to the board through regulation, as with the other prescribing professions. But the bill does clearly prohibit injections into the vitreous body of the eye, which is done by specialty ophthalmologists.

SB 55 re-writes the optometry definition which is currently over 40 years old. Optometrists are trained to perform far more advanced procedures than many years ago. The new definition clearly defines modern optometry, and allows the board the flexibility to assure protection of the public. And there is a section on limitations on practice which excludes any invasive surgery, and a section clearly defining all the excluded surgery reserved for ophthalmology, including laser PRK, even though many optometrists can perform this in a few other states, it is still prohibited in SB 55.

Thank you for your attention.....Dr. Jerimiah Myers "Doc"

PO Box 1948

Kodiak, AK 99615

(907) 539-2010 cell

(907) 486-6117 office

Dear Senator Giessel,

I am writing to ask you to please support SB 55.

SB 55 updates the Alaska Optometry Statute in several key areas.

SB 55 addresses the will of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development to put the continuing education requirements back into regulation--where they belong.

SB 55 will allow the optometric board to determine the regulatory details of practice similar to dental and nurse practitioners. This flexibility is important if we are to continue to bring quality, timely advances in eye care technology to our patients throughout Alaska.

SB 55 updates and clearly defines modern day optometry. In Alaska and around the country, today's optometrist, unlike generations ago, in addition to utilizing pharmaceuticals, employ the use of sophisticated lasers and imaging equipment to best diagnose, manage and treat ocular conditions ranging from glaucoma, corneal disease, to diseases of the retina.

SB 55 safeguards the public by requiring optometrists to be qualified for any procedures they perform.

SB 55 defines limitations of practice. Invasive surgery is expressly prohibited and "invasive" is clearly defined.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Steven S. Dobson, O.D.

President, Alaska Optometric Association

Past Chair, Alaska Board of Optometry

