

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Eric Coulter <Eric@AlaskaLasikCenter.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 6:52 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** Vote no on HB103

Dear Senators,

This email is encouraging you to **vote against HB103**. Along with the Alaska State Medical Board, the Alaska State Medical Association, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the Alaska Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons and all of the State of Alaska ophthalmologists, I have sent letters prior and testified by phone for various committees. The latest testimony by optometrists in support of this bill expressed nebulous reasons for its passage. They indicate it is to "modernize" and to be better able to "manage themselves". **It is a surgical bill. This is a national effort by the optometric paramedical personnel to legislate themselves into surgeons.** This is a waste of our States resources. It is happening in Florida as well and a few other states as it does every year.

The optometrists are not running to get individual approvals from the legislature every time they want to do something new (as claimed) because they do not need to. Their current scope of practice is well defined and does not include surgery. They want to perform surgery and that is why this bill exists. Statutes for all other medically oriented boards in Alaska have limits within them in terms of practice scope. Why should optometrists be treated any differently? They claim to be caged and incapable of managing themselves with the current statutes. The only thing this bill would change

**Do you want non surgeons performing surgery? That is the question before you.** It is a *surgical bill*, as nothing else within it makes any difference in terms of how they self-regulate. It simply removes any restrictions to their scope of practice. Can't you see this? It is in writing in the bill regardless of testimony, you can just see it there. They have removed surgical restrictions.

***Please ask yourself these questions:***

1. Why is this bill structured in this open ended way with removal of restrictions of surgery, lasers, x-rays and pharmaceutical agents unless expansion of scope and surgical privileges is anticipated? Why cannot any of the Pro HB103 involved specify what new and modern things there are that are non-surgical that they anticipate not being able to perform within the current definition of optometry? There is nothing;

- they can do everything except surgery or lasers or scalpels or x-rays. Why do they want these privileges? To expand their scope of practice into the surgical arena.
2. What specific details are they unable to manage currently among themselves with current law? Are the current definitions of optometry, which restrict them to no surgery, a barrier to self-management? I would say no unless surgery is the goal.
  3. Why is allowing an optometrist to consider surgery "modernizing the statutes"? This is self-defeating and marching backwards when board certified Medical Doctor ophthalmic surgeons are plentiful here. We are not in a battle zone where anyone, anywhere can do anything.
  4. We are the last frontier and should not be known as the only state in the union allowing physicians without a medical license to perform any type of surgery.

Approving HB103 as written is a disaster and a blank check for non-surgeons to perform surgery. Please draw a line in the sand and maintain Alaska's surgical integrity like the rest of the country does.

Eric W. Coulter, M.D.

Fellow, AAO; Diplomat, ABO

Medical Director



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(907) 569-1564 Fax

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Evan Wolf <evan@wolfeyecenter.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 6:58 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** HB 103

Dear Senators,

I urge you to oppose this bill as it stands currently.

I am an ophthalmologist in the Matsu Valley, and I must stand up for the medical/surgical safety of our state's residents. I've worked here for 15 years, and I've watched this type of legislation come and go...in Alaska and all over the country. The bottom line is that the current wording of this bill gives the optometric profession carte blanche to do surgeries which they will have no relevant training to do. This will be disastrous for patient safety, and I cannot handle the volume of surgical problems that would be created by untrained surgical providers. I'm afraid this type of care environment could push needed MD surgeons out of our state, to places with safer, more sensible regulations.

The solution to this situation is very simple. Please see the Washington state regs which very clearly delineate the definition of surgery, and the scope of practice of optometry.

I trust you will do the right thing here, and not allow this dangerous legislation to pass.

Thank you for all you do in keeping Alaska safe, and great!

Best regards,

Evan

Evan Wolf, MD PhD  
Wolf Eye Center  
Wasilla, AK

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** R Kevin Winkle <kwx4@earthlink.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 7:35 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Senator.Mike.Dunlavy@akleg.gov; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Senator.Mia.Costell@akleg.gov; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; SenatorPeter.Micciche@akleg.gov; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** Eye Safety

Dear Senator,

Currently, Optometrists already have essential control over their own board. The only real issue is that they do not control expanding their scope of practice into areas where they have not previously practiced such as procedures and surgery. The agenda of Optometry across the country is to expand their scope of practice to include procedures and actual surgery on, in, and around the eye. A simple internet search confirms this. HB103 is about Optometry having complete control to expand into parts of eye care for which they do not have the same level of training as other medical professionals.

Optometry is a no less respected specialty than any other specialty in medicine and we all rely on their expertise as primary care practitioners of the eye. Many years ago, Optometry was primarily refractive care of the eye. Now, thanks to more advanced training they are medical specialists of the eye, though there are distinctive differences in the depth and breadth of their four year Optometry training compared to an Ophthalmologist's eight to ten years of medical and surgical training as well as other medical specialists who have gone to medical school.

The standard of appropriate training in medicine to be able to perform procedures and surgical interventions is very clear in the rest of the medical community to include podiatrists, dentists, and maxillo-facial surgeons. Even though Optometrists consider themselves medical specialists, Optometry somehow falls into its own category where the primarily nonmedical legislature makes a decision about what is safe in their wish to expand their scope of practice. Perhaps a clear, definitive and immutable definition by statute of scope of practice of Optometry would be appropriate prior to handing over complete control of their own board or simply place Optometry under the Medical Board where other fellow doctorate trained medical professionals can help make appropriate advances in their scope of practice.

Finally, who is going to see you when you are going blind on a Saturday night and to whom is your Optometrist going to refer to when you are losing vision and going blind? It's your local Ophthalmologist. Why is this? It is because this is what our depth and breadth of training to treat eye diseases has prepared us to do. We have a pulse on our colleagues and know they are very valuable to the eye care of Alaskans. We also know that most but not all of our colleagues have no desire to practice other than safe medical Optometry and we also realize that there is a difference between the two Eye specialties since we are confronted with it daily in our practice of Ophthalmology. This is why I know that this is a safety issue for Alaskans if we create a different standard of training and allow scope of practice expansion for Optometrists.

Thank you for understanding that allowing any medical group to meet a lower standard of patient safety is not the standard that we want to set in Alaska. Please thoroughly consider the issues and vote NO on HB103.

Regards,

R. Kevin Winkle, MD, Pediatric Ophthalmology

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Sen. Anna MacKinnon  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 9:06 AM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Juli Lucky  
**Subject:** FW: Oppose HB 103

**From:** Carl Rosen [mailto:crosen@finite-tech.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 6:59 AM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly <Sen.Pete.Kelly@akleg.gov>; Sen. John Coghill <Sen.John.Coghill@akleg.gov>; Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Dunleavy <Sen.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.gov>; Sen. Shelley Hughes <Senator.Shelley.Hughes@akleg.gov>; Sen. Anna MacKinnon <Sen.Anna.MacKinnon@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>; Sen. Berta Gardner <Sen.Berta.Gardner@akleg.gov>; Sen. Tom Begich <Sen.Tom.Begich@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mia Costello <Sen.Mia.Costello@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. Kevin Meyer <Sen.Kevin.Meyer@akleg.gov>; Sen. Peter Micciche <Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov>; Sen. Gary Stevens <Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>; Sen. Dennis Egan <Sen.Dennis.Egan@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Oppose HB 103

Dear Member of the Senate:

Thank you for this opportunity to voice my strong opposition to HB 103.

I am an ophthalmologist, specifically an Oculoplastic surgeon and Neuro-ophthalmologist. That means I am an eyelid surgeon who works with neurology and neurosurgery treating and diagnosing patients. I take care of bumps and cysts and the like on eyelids. I have performed over 15,000 surgeries on folks with eyelid and orbit abnormalities. Cancers, reconstruction, trauma, what have you. I have been in practice for 24 years at Ophthalmic Associates in Anchorage. I am the past President of the Alaska State Medical Association.

We have heard repeatedly this bill is not about surgery and optometry has no business doing surgery and does not want to do surgery. The sponsor, Representative Sponholz said this bill is not about surgery and her aide has claimed all surgery language was removed from the bill. I heard as times change the scope of practice must be modernized by the optometry board and should a surgical procedure be deemed within the scope of practice by the optometry board they don't want to come back to the legislature. The assistant attorney general previously stated that public testimony would help decide if a surgery was appropriate for an optometrist.

Doesn't that bother you? Not only would there be no one with actual surgical experience on this board but you are going to double down and ask the public for help. Why not ask an expert, someone with actual experience, the stakes are too high. It seems so innocent to say I'll remove a foreign body or I'll drain a cyst or inject a stye. What happens when the foreign body is full thickness and now you have a leaking open eye? Or you've drained a stye and get scarring and lid retraction and the patient can't close the eye any longer or a MRSA infection pops up and necrosis of the eyelid requires full thickness skin grafting.

Dental and Nurse practitioner boards police themselves because they learn procedures in graduate school. Optometry students do not perform surgery, lasers or injections on real people. It seems a little weak to be OK with an 8-hour injection course at the Holiday Inn, call it good and you are ready to put a needle into an eye with macular degeneration or diabetic retinopathy or better yet a premature infant with retinopathy of prematurity.

If you say something enough times it takes on reality. I'm asking folks to wake up, think about what is being said here. I will reiterate the JAMA July 2016 article's conclusion: health policymakers should be cautious about approving laser privileges for optometrists.

Optometrists do not take hospital emergency call, all active ophthalmologists other than the Pacific Cataract and Laser Surgery (PCLI) ophthalmologist take call for Alaska. Optometrists cannot admit or transfer patients to a hospital. The hospital bylaws prohibit it.

We like to plan for the unknown. We buy fire insurance though it is unlikely we will ever need it. Why then are we willing to risk patient safety based on "trust us". We still don't know exactly what surgical procedures optometry wants. How are we to agree to this when the entire bill is vague and poorly written. We are racing toward a slippery slope. For patient safety, we need to set boundaries with consequences. Let's fix this with a definition of surgery.

I will close with this thought, at some point in your lives you or your family will need an ophthalmologist. Do you want to continue to alienate and marginalize the Alaskan ophthalmology community? As it stands it is difficult to recruit new ophthalmologists to Alaska, this bill makes it more difficult. There is no public outcry. In the last 3 years no cosponsors on the Senate side and only one on the house side.

Thank you,

Carl Rosen, MD

Ophthalmic Associates

Anchorage, Alaska

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Sen. Anna MacKinnon  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 9:09 AM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Juli Lucky  
**Subject:** FW: HB 103

**From:** Melody Feniks [mailto:mel@fenikscpa.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 03, 2017 6:30 PM  
**To:** Sen. Anna MacKinnon <Sen.Anna.MacKinnon@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 103

Senator MacKinnon,

While I recognize that I am not your constituent, I am writing as an Alaskan citizen concerned for the safety of Alaskans, and the hazards that could result from legislation now in the hands of the Senate. In reading HB 103 and the related concerns, I was shocked to see this legislation moved so quickly out of the House to the Senate. It is my understanding that the definition of surgery remains an unresolved issue, this issue appears to be at the core of the objections voiced by professionals across the medical community. I struggle to understand why the importance associated with this protective language is being seemingly ignored. I hope the permanent impact of legislation on the citizenry of our State is always at the top of consideration. Extension of surgical procedures and prescribing capabilities would seem to require careful consideration and process to help ensure your constituents, neighbors, and all Alaskans are truly benefited by such change. In its current form, there are many expressing concern that rather than a benefit it brings risk to the public as many may not understand the limitations of the individual now allowed to perform procedures that are permanent. Reading that all physicians organizations oppose the passing of this legislation, I do not understand the haste with which it is moving, or what is creating the need for such momentum. I believe this bill needs to be held to develop an amendment that would define surgery in a manner supported by Ophthalmologists and careful analysis given to the need for change and who is seeking its quick institution in our State. Thank you for your consideration.

Enjoy the day,

Melody Feniks, CPA

<http://www.fenikscpa.com/>

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Robin Walker <robin@wolfeyecenter.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 05, 2017 4:06 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** Opposition HB103

Dear Senators,

Re: HB103

As a professional in the eye care industry who has worked closely with ophthalmologists (MD's) and optometrists (OD's) in Alaska for the past 19 years, I oppose this bill as it is written. It is dangerous to extend surgical privileges to those who have not received the appropriate training and do not possess the skill level to operate safely. If optometrists are seeking to perform "any type of surgery" then the education and training requirements need to be reestablished before any legislation is even considered.

I urge you to oppose this bill as it currently stands.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robin Walker

Practice Manager

Wolf Eye Center

P: 907-352-3464

F: 907-357-3937



## **Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Sen. Anna MacKinnon  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 12:57 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Juli Lucky  
**Subject:** FW: PLEASE OPPOSE SB36/HB103

*Susan Wallen*

Executive Assistant  
Office of Senator Anna MacKinnon  
907-694-8944  
[susan.wallen@akleg.gov](mailto:susan.wallen@akleg.gov)  
[sen.anna.mackinnon@akleg.gov](mailto:sen.anna.mackinnon@akleg.gov)

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**From:** Griffith Steiner, MD [mailto:gsteiner@akeyedoc.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 12:46 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly <Sen.Pete.Kelly@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mia Costello <Sen.Mia.Costello@akleg.gov>; Sen. Tom Begich <Sen.Tom.Begich@akleg.gov>; Sen. Kevin Meyer <Sen.Kevin.Meyer@akleg.gov>; Sen. Anna MacKinnon <Sen.Anna.MacKinnon@akleg.gov>; Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Gary Stevens <Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Peter Micciche <Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Dunleavy <Sen.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Shelley Hughes <Senator.Shelley.Hughes@akleg.gov>; Sen. Dennis Egan <Sen.Dennis.Egan@akleg.gov>; Sen. Berta Gardner <Sen.Berta.Gardner@akleg.gov>; Sen. John Coghill <Sen.John.Coghill@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** PLEASE OPPOSE SB36/HB103

Dear Alaska State Senators,

**Please oppose this poorly written and misleading bill.**

I am not against an independent board that oversees optometrists and the practice of optometry, but surgery is not part of optometry.

Their comparison to having an independent board similar to the dental board is not analogous as the dentists are overseeing the very procedures dentists trained for 4+ years during which they obtained their expertise. The optometrists have NEVER been trained in surgery and they want the autonomy to approve and oversee surgery by optometrists. If the optometrists say this is not about surgery, it's just about autonomy, then they wouldn't have added the "unless" after the surgical definition. They have said that they want autonomy just in case new/future procedures are developed within their scope of practice. But, we know that the purpose of this bill is to do laser surgery that has been around for decades, that optometry schools don't teach and they have NEVER DONE (except recently in Oklahoma and Kentucky, which was mistake and studies have proven that patients receive more expensive care and greater frequency of laser treatment at the hands of optometrists).

Ask the optometrists point blank if they would consider approving "YAG LASER CAPSULOTOMY", "LASER TRABECULOPLASTY" and/or "LASER IRIDOTOMY". If they say no, they are not being truthful. If they say something like "perhaps" or "that will be up to the board." They are dodging the question. These are not possible future treatments. These surgeries have been around for decades and have not been in the scope of optometric teaching or practice for decades for a reason!

We, as ophthalmologists, have insisted on a definition of surgery in the bill that defines what optometrists MUST NOT do in the interest of public safety. We finally got this in the bill, but it was immediately gutted when the optometrists had "unless..." added after the definition. This negates the entire purpose of the definition by allowing the optometric board to decide and makes the bill WORSE by now explicitly listing the very procedures we know are inappropriate and legislatively giving the optometric board permission to approve them if they choose to do so!

This is not a turf battle for us as ophthalmologists. This is about patient safety. If there is anything selfish for us in this bill, it is that we don't want to handle the inevitable complications of lesser skilled providers. (If they say there is no evidence that optometrists would have complications, then they truly have no clue about the nature of surgery. Study after study with ANY profession shows that those with YEARS of training have greater success and fewer complications than those with HOURS of training. This should be obvious, but is proven with studies none-the-less. Consider the likelihood of equivalent skill of a medical doctor with YEARS of laser training vs an optometrist that takes a 2 day course in laser surgery. You wouldn't let a person touch your car with 2 days of training, let alone your eyes!

**Voting against this bill or insisting on the removal of the "unless" clause is paramount for patient safety.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to call, text or email me anytime if you have any questions.

Griff Steiner, MD  
Anchorage  
4th generation Alaskan, practicing here for over 20 years.

## **Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Robin Walker <robin@wolfeyecenter.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 05, 2017 4:06 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** Opposition HB103

Dear Senators,

Re: HB103

As a professional in the eye care industry who has worked closely with ophthalmologists (MD's) and optometrists (OD's) in Alaska for the past 19 years, I oppose this bill as it is written. It is dangerous to extend surgical privileges to those who have not received the appropriate training and do not possess the skill level to operate safely. If optometrists are seeking to perform "any type of surgery" then the education and training requirements need to be reestablished before any legislation is even considered.

I urge you to oppose this bill as it currently stands.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robin Walker

Practice Manager

Wolf Eye Center

P: 907-352-3464

F: 907-357-3937

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Elsie Slanaker <elslanaker@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 07, 2017 9:54 AM  
**To:** Sen. Anna MacKinnon  
**Subject:** Please oppose HB103!

Senator MacKinnon,

As your constituent, I am deeply disturbed that the Alaska State Senate is considering HB103, legislation to grant optometrists - who are not medical doctors - the authority to perform delicate eye surgeries using scalpels, lasers and other surgical equipment on patients here in Alaska. I am concerned that this legislation poses a risk to the high standard of safety and quality of care I enjoy in our state.

The thought of someone who hasn't obtained a medical degree operating anywhere near my eyes or the eyes of a loved one is downright scary. I would hope you feel the same. This type of surgery should only be done by experienced physicians and surgeons who have completed the required medical school education and surgical residency training. Any legislation that would bypass these protections is dubious at best, and would be dangerous for patients. Alaska deserves better.

With an ever-changing healthcare landscape, the last thing we need is to lower the standards of patient safety, especially when it comes to surgery on or near our eyes. For these reasons, I ask that you vote no on HB103.

Sent from my iPad

## **Doniece Gott**

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**From:** David Swanson <r3t1na@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 07, 2017 7:41 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** HB 103 Regarding Fitness of Optometrists to perform eye surgery

Dear Senators,

RE: HB 103 / SB 36

At the risk of further inundating you with reasons why it is a bad idea to permit optometrists to start practicing eye surgery, I would like to bring to your attention the Pacific University School of Optometry's curriculum of study for the four-year doctoral degree.

<https://www.pacificu.edu/future-graduate-professional/colleges/college-optometry/areas-study/optometry-od>

They state, "we pride ourselves on our clinically oriented program, focusing on the graduation of a comprehensive practitioner with expertise in general optometry, contact lenses, low vision, vision therapy, sports vision and ocular disease". Note: no surgical training.

And for the additional residency year, "Residency Programs provide optometric physicians the opportunity for an additional year of structured educational and advanced clinical experiences in cornea & contact lenses, geriatric optometry, low vision rehabilitation, ocular disease, pediatric optometry, primary eye care, refractive & ocular surgery co-management, and vision therapy & rehabilitation". Note again: no surgical training.

Lest you think this University offers a watered down course of training, note that the PU program was founded in 1921 and...

"Pacific University is a fully accredited member of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) of the American Optometric Association (AOA)".

Attempts have been made to compare Optometry to Dentistry. The contrasts are more illuminating than the comparisons. Dentists undergo two to three years of hands-on, supervised actual dental surgery with a critically judged demonstration of competence before they are granted a license to practice. There is absolutely no parallel in optometric education and it astounds me that any informed person could conclude otherwise.

Please think carefully about who you would want to operate on your eyes and defeat this poorly worded, ill-conceived bit of legislation that somehow keeps coming back to life year after year after year.

David Swanson, MD

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Kathy P <kprivratsky65@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 07, 2017 4:25 AM  
**To:** Rep. Lance Pruitt; Sen. Cathy Giessel  
**Subject:** HB 103

Please vote NO on House Bill 103 if it comes up for a vote. My optometrist seems to think he could do surgery on my eyes as well as an ophthalmologist I don't think so. I want an Ophthalmologist to do my cataract surgery in 2 weeks. She/he has much more medical training.  
Please vote No!

Kathy Privratsky

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Elizabeth Conway <Econway@uw.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 08, 2017 3:00 PM  
**Subject:** HB103 is bad for the health of Alaskans

Dear Senator,

Please oppose HB103, which gives optometrists (who are not medical doctors) prescription and surgical privileges. This is a bad bill all around and it is being pushed by out of state optometrist groups so other lower 48 states will follow suit. This is a typical move by big interests to use Alaskan politics and Alaskans' health as pawns in a national game. Optometrists do not have surgical training and would put patients at risk if they were to try surgery, a skill that should only be performed by medical doctors. If this bill passes, it will also be more difficult to attract surgically trained ophthalmologists (medical doctors who did a residency in eye surgery) to the state of Alaska. Please oppose this bill and keep medical and surgical interventions of the eye in the hands of medical and surgical professionals of Alaska.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Conway  
University of Washington SOM Class of 2017  
(801) 915-6314



## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Nora Dekeyser <nora@threedayrule.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 08, 2017 1:03 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** Opposing House Bill 103

Dear Senator,

Please oppose HB103, which gives optometrists prescription and surgical privileges. This is a bad bill all around and it is being pushed by out of state optometrist groups so other lower 48 states will follow suite. They DO NOT have Alaskan's interests at heart while pushing this through our state government. Optometrists do not have surgical training. If this bill passes, it will make it more difficult to attract surgically trained ophthalmologists to the state of Alaska. Please oppose this bill and keep medical and surgical interventions of the eye in the hands of medical and surgical professionals of Alaska.

This bill would allow optometrists who have not completed medical or surgical training to obtain licenses to do so on your eyes. They would be able to prescribe controlled substances and perform permanent vision altering procedures with no formal training in these areas. The bill states they would need 8 hours of "board approved education" to prescribe controlled substances and only 7 hours of similar education to perform actual surgeries and other procedures on eyes. These forms of permanent ocular and sight altering interventions should be performed only after years of training, not 15 hours of "board approved education."

This is a bad bill all around and it is being pushed by out of state optometrists groups so that other states will follow suite. They DO NOT have Alaskan's interests at heart while pushing this through our state government. The bill has been sponsored twice in the past two years and it is up for another vote in the Senate this Wednesday. I am asking earnestly for your help by emailing our representatives with me to let them know that this is not a good bill to support.

Here is the bill's definition of Ophthalmic surgery: "Ophthalmic surgery means an invasive procedure in which human tissue is cut, ablated, or otherwise penetrated by incision, laser, or other means to treat diseases of the human eye, alter or correct refractive error, or alter or enhance cosmetic appearance." Ophthalmologists complete 4 years of medical training followed by another 4 years of medical/surgical training specializing in the eye to perform these surgeries.

The following is more information to help you make the best decision for yourself. Optometrists have trained only 4 years to correct visual acuity by external and non-permanent means without prescription medication or surgery. Injecting medicine into the posterior portion of a patient's eye is no small procedure, nor is any eye altering surgery for that matter, and it can lead to blindness and/or permanent damage if not done correctly and shouldn't be done by those who have not spent 8 years training to do so. Lasers are also not without risk and optometrists are not trained to use these.

It is true, anyone can be trained to inject, cut, and permanently change the contours of your cornea and other eye structures, sure, but it is the 8 years of medical and surgical knowledge that ophthalmologists are trained in that dictates to them when it is best not to pursue these permanent therapies in the small, delicate, and valuable piece of real estate known to you as your eye. I repeat: this is a bad bill all around and it is being pushed by out of state optometrist groups so that other lower 48 states will follow suite. They DO NOT have Alaskan's interests at heart while pushing this through our state government. It is an absolute shame and a travesty.

Nora Dekeyser  
Matchmaker, Three Day Rule  
[www.threedayrule.com](http://www.threedayrule.com)

Check out our upcoming TDR events!



**Doniece Gott**

---

**From:** Alexander Foster <armanthus@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 08, 2017 12:20 PM  
**Subject:** Please oppose HB103.

Hello Dear Senator,

Please oppose HB103, which gives optometrists prescription and surgical privileges. This is a bad bill all around and it is being pushed by out of state optometrist groups so other lower 48 states will follow suite. They DO NOT have Alaskan's interests at heart while pushing this through our state government. Optometrists do not have surgical training. If this bill passes, it will make it more difficult to attract surgically trained ophthalmologists to the state of Alaska. Please oppose this bill and keep medical and surgical interventions of the eye in the hands of medical and surgical professionals of Alaska.

Thank you.

--  
**Alexander A. Foster, MS4**  
**M.D. Candidate - 2017**  
**University of Washington**  
**School of Medicine**  
**(907) 310-0982**  
**[Armanthus@gmail.com](mailto:Armanthus@gmail.com)**

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Catherine Mannix <mannixalaska@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 09, 2017 6:45 AM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** HB103

Dear Senator,

Please oppose HB103, which gives optometrists prescription and surgical privileges. This is a bad bill all around and it is being pushed by out of state optometrist groups so other lower 48 states will follow suite. They DO NOT have Alaskan's interests at heart while pushing this through our state government. Optometrists do not have surgical training. If this bill passes, it will make it more difficult to attract surgically trained ophthalmologists to the state of Alaska. Please oppose this bill and keep medical and surgical interventions of the eye in the hands of medical and surgical professionals of Alaska.

*Sincerely,*

*Catherine Mannix*

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Stan Fuller <fuller\_stan@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 09, 2017 1:07 AM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** Please oppose HB103

Dear Alaska State Senators,

In short summary, I am writing to ask you to **please oppose HB 103**. It is misleading, and not in the best interest of patients here in Alaska.

Please allow me to expand a little. I am an ophthalmologist in Fairbanks, Alaska. Having spent most of my youth in Alaska, and graduating from Lathrop High School in Fairbanks, I am glad to be back in Alaska and taking care of patients in this great state.

One thing that has proven itself time and again in talking with my patients, is how much they value their eyesight. Additionally, the appearance of their eyes and eyelids, and the protection of their future eyesight, are critical to them. While many of them could not tell you the difference between an optometrist and an ophthalmologist if asked, they are relying on you to do what is best to establish and maintain laws that are in their best interest and align with their deep desire to preserve and protect their vision. Thank you for the work you do and for shouldering this burden on their behalf.

I am not against the creation of an independent board that oversees optometrists and the practice of optometry here in Alaska, such would seem reasonable. However, it would seem to me to be moving beyond reasonable, and not in the best interest of Alaskans, to then allow that board to approve optometrists in this state to do things such as surgical and laser procedures, as defined in the bill as ophthalmic surgery, that they are not trained to do, have not been doing up to this point, and are not considered part of the practice and scope of optometry. While I applaud the definition of surgery in the bill, the wording still gives the optometry board the ability to approve whatever they feel their members are qualified to do, including ophthalmic surgery. The use of the word "unless" after the phrase "A licensee may not perform ophthalmic surgery" grants the board that power.

There is a path, already defined and accepted, for any person to be a candidate for taking on the rights and responsibilities to perform ophthalmic surgery - to complete medical school followed by completion of

ophthalmology residency. This path is an intensive, long, and involved pursuit to gain the knowledge and ability to perform surgery/lasers on a critical and highly valued, intricate, small, and often delicate part of the body. Why is this bill seeking to change that path? Surely such a change would not be in the best interest of Alaskans who seek to preserve and protect their vision.

I strongly advise voting against HB 103, or insisting that it be changed to remove the "unless" clause discussed above.

Thank you for you time and service. I am happy to answer any questions and can be reached by email, phone (907-371-5613), or text.

Sincerely,

Stanley Fuller MD

Fairbanks

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Kurt Heitman <kheitman@southern-eye.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 08, 2017 7:06 PM  
**To:** Oliver Korshin  
**Cc:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. John Coghill; Griffith Steiner, MD; limstrom@gmail.com; rgrendahl@gmail.com; mlevitt@aao.org; kwinkle@alaskachildreneye.com; evan@wolfeyecenter.com; eric@alaskalasikcenter.com; Elizabeth Morgan, MD; sammymoll@yahoo.com; crosen@mphage.com; bmarr@aao.org; bpalmer@aao.org; alderamus@gmail.com; sfuller@eyeclinicfbks.com; Bob Arnold; David Swanson; Frank Bickford; Rachel Reinhardt; John and Mary Catherine Siebel; Bill Paton  
**Subject:** Re: PLEASE OPPOSE SB36/HB103

Excellent

Sent from my iPhone

> On May 8, 2017, at 9:44 PM, Oliver Korshin <korshino@gmail.com> wrote:  
>  
> Monday, May 8, 2017  
>  
> Dear Alaska Senators:  
>  
> May I introduce myself? My name is Oliver Korshin. I'm a general ophthalmologist, with an M. D. degree from Harvard Medical School, a straight internal medicine internship at Boston City Hospital and a combined three year residency in ophthalmology at the U. S. Public Health Service Hospital and at Letterman Army Medical Center, both in San Francisco. I am also boarded in General Preventive Medicine.  
>  
> In 1982 I was assigned to the Alaska Native Medical Center as the chief of the ophthalmology service. This meant that I not only worked at ANMC, but in the Bush, holding clinics in Ketchikan, Sitka, Dillingham, Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, Fairbanks and Barrow. I was also responsible for hiring not only ophthalmologists — but optometrists, most of whom worked full-time in our regional centers, and with whom I worked closely on a daily basis, both in person and by phone. I have the greatest respect for those optometrists and for their profession.  
>  
> I have long since entered private practice: I am now 74 years old and no longer perform ophthalmic surgery — hence I really do not have a dog in this fight, so I think I can justifiably take a disinterested position on the surgical implications of SB36/HB103. These are bad bills, for all the reasons you have heard from my younger colleagues, who every day perform vision-saving surgery on our Alaska citizens (and on tourists who fall ill or are injured while vacationing here: think fish hook and sinker injuries to the eye).  
>  
> It's not a "turf war" when these dedicated surgeons oppose SB36/HB103: they oppose it based their training and experience, as well as on the Hippocratic Oath which all of us, as Medical Doctors, must take. The Oath addresses a number of ethical standards, including: "First, Do No Harm." We obey this oath every day as a basic precept of medical practice, not as a way to dodge medical malpractice lawsuits.  
>

> I do not know what oath, if any, optometrists take, but SB36/ HB103 violates the "First, Do No Harm" admonition, because optometrists have neither the training nor experience to perform complex, high risk ophthalmic surgery, which these bills would inevitably allow, given the broad, open-ended latitude they give to the Optometric Board to define what surgeries their licensees may perform. Scalpels, needles and laser beams can do great good, but they can also cause great harm in the wrong hands. Just because a person has a private pilot's ticket does not mean he can fly a passenger jet, yet that is the essence of these bills: allowing licensees to perform procedures in which they have zero in-depth training or experience.

>

> You, as senators, also do not take the Hippocratic Oath, but I am sure every one of you is fully dedicated to the protection and safety of the Alaskans you serve.

>

> Alaskans will be ill-served by the passage of these bills into law.

>

> Please vote "No" on SB36

>

> Respectfully,

>

> Oliver M. Korshin, M. D.

> General Ophthalmology

> 1200 Airport Heights Drive

> Suite 310

> Anchorage, Alaska 99508

> 907.276.8838

>

>

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## **Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Jeremy Sobocinski <jsobocin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 08, 2017 6:57 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** Regarding HB103

Dear Senator,

Please oppose HB103, which gives optometrists prescription and surgical privileges. This is a bad bill all around and it is being pushed by out of state optometrist groups so other lower 48 states will follow suit. They DO NOT have Alaskan's interests at heart while pushing this through our state government. Optometrists do not have surgical training. If this bill passes, it will make it more difficult to attract surgically trained ophthalmologists to the state of Alaska and will likely lower the quality of care that Alaskans receive. Please oppose this bill and keep medical and surgical interventions of the eye in the hands of medical and surgical professionals of Alaska.

Thank you,

Jeremy Sobocinski

2017 MD Candidate at the University of Washington

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Emily Foster <fosterbymarriage@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 08, 2017 3:17 PM  
**Subject:** HB103

Dear Senator,

Please oppose HB103, which gives optometrists prescription and surgical privileges. This is a bad bill all around and it is being pushed by out of state optometrist groups so other lower 48 states will follow suite. They DO NOT have Alaskan's interests at heart while pushing this through our state government. Optometrists do not have surgical training. If this bill passes, it will make it more difficult to attract surgically trained ophthalmologists to the state of Alaska. Please oppose this bill and keep medical and surgical interventions of the eye in the hands of medical and surgical professionals of Alaska.

Thank you,

Emily Foster

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Kelly Lorenz <klorenz23@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 08, 2017 4:29 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson  
**Subject:** KEEP ALASKANS SAFE!

Dear Alaska State Senators,

I am writing to ask you to oppose HB103. This bill would LOWER THE STANDARD OF EYE CARE IN ALASKA. Is this what we want for our people? There are better answers to serving our citizens.

First, this is NOT a “housekeeping” bill created to reflect current optometric practices of corneal foreign body removal. Optometrists would not be inclined to fight this hard for a “housekeeping” bill. This bill seeks to allow optometrists to perform specific surgical procedures involving lasers and scalpels that cut and burn the tissue of the eye.

“So, what?” you ask...

**Ophthalmologists:** After receiving an undergraduate degree, ophthalmologists spend four years in medical school earning an M.D., followed by a year of surgical internship, three years of a surgical ophthalmology residency, and often finish with a 1-2-year surgical fellowship. During this time, we spend nights/weekends/holidays on-call for emergency situations. Our entire training is focused on pathology of the eye, sterile technique, and intensive surgical training.

**Optometrists:** spend four years examining the eye for visual defects and prescribing corrective lenses.

According to a study by the National Consumers League, 30 percent of people don't know this difference between an ophthalmologist and an optometrist. Further, **95 percent** of people surveyed want an M.D. when it comes to eye surgery. Where is the public outcry for this bill??

Moreover, the surgical procedures (including lasers) optometrists would like to add to their repertoire are not taught in optometry school. In a past House meeting, someone asked the question, "How will the Board of Optometry ascertain whether an optometrist is adept at performing these procedures?" Their answer was to present a lawyer whose only means of determining fitness was essentially by the number malpractice suits they accumulate.

In addition, you may have heard the argument that optometrists seek to bring more care to otherwise deprived Alaskans in remote villages. I cannot emphasize enough how terrible this argument is. Some of the procedures they would like to perform would put rural Alaskans in danger. I repeat, there is no need to do these procedures in rural Alaska, away from a well-equipped operating room. Complications inevitably occur no matter how seasoned the surgeon, many of which are exquisitely time-dependent. When the inevitable problem occurs, we would not be doing our patients a favor by having done these procedures remotely! We have ophthalmologists who travel all over Alaska (I know because I was one of them), and this is the reason we didn't take portable lasers with us.

It seems to me that if I were a Senator, I would want only the best care for my constituents. I would focus on making Alaska an attractive place to practice for highly-qualified surgically-trained ophthalmologists. Lowering the standard of care in Alaska is not the answer.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Lorenz, M.D.

Ophthalmologist/Glaucoma Specialist

Anchorage, Alaska

## Doniece Gott

---

**From:** Oliver Korshin <korshino@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 08, 2017 5:45 PM  
**To:** Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. David Wilson; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. John Coghill  
**Cc:** Griffith Steiner, MD; limstrom@gmail.com; rgrendahl@gmail.com; mlevitt@aao.org; kheitman@southern-eye.com; kwinkle@alaskachildrenseye.com; evan@wolfeyecenter.com; eric@alaskalaskcenter.com; Elizabeth Morgan, MD; sammymoll@yahoo.com; crosen@mphage.com; bmarr@aao.org; bpalmer@aao.org; alderamus@gmail.com; sfuller@eyeclinicfbks.com; Bob Arnold; David Swanson; Frank Bickford; Rachel Reinhardt; John and Mary Catherine Siebel; Bill Paton  
**Subject:** PLEASE OPPOSE SB36/HB103

Monday, May 8, 2017

Dear Alaska Senators:

May I introduce myself? My name is Oliver Korshin. I'm a general ophthalmologist, with an M. D. degree from Harvard Medical School, a straight internal medicine internship at Boston City Hospital and a combined three year residency in ophthalmology at the U. S. Public Health Service Hospital and at Letterman Army Medical Center, both in San Francisco. I am also boarded in General Preventive Medicine.

In 1982 I was assigned to the Alaska Native Medical Center as the chief of the ophthalmology service. This meant that I not only worked at ANMC, but in the Bush, holding clinics in Ketchikan, Sitka, Dillingham, Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, Fairbanks and Barrow. I was also responsible for hiring not only ophthalmologists — but optometrists, most of whom worked full-time in our regional centers, and with whom I worked closely on a daily basis, both in person and by phone. I have the greatest respect for those optometrists and for their profession.

I have long since entered private practice: I am now 74 years old and no longer perform ophthalmic surgery — hence I really do not have a dog in this fight, so I think I can justifiably take a disinterested position on the surgical implications of SB36/HB103. These are bad bills, for all the reasons you have heard from my younger colleagues, who every day perform vision-saving surgery on our Alaska citizens (and on tourists who fall ill or are injured while vacationing here: think fish hook and sinker injuries to the eye).

It's not a "turf war" when these dedicated surgeons oppose SB36/HB103: they oppose it based their training and experience, as well as on the Hippocratic Oath which all of us, as Medical Doctors, must take. The Oath addresses a number of ethical standards, including: "First, Do No Harm." We obey this oath every day as a basic precept of medical practice, not as a way to dodge medical malpractice lawsuits.

I do not know what oath, if any, optometrists take, but SB36/HB103 violates the "First, Do No Harm" admonition, because optometrists have neither the training nor experience to perform complex, high risk ophthalmic surgery, which these bills would inevitably allow, given the broad, open-ended latitude they give to the Optometric Board to define what surgeries their licensees may perform. Scalpels, needles and laser beams can do great good, but they can also cause great harm in the wrong hands. Just because a person has a private pilot's ticket does not mean he can fly a passenger jet, yet that is the essence of these bills: allowing licensees to perform procedures in which they have zero in-depth training or experience.

You, as senators, also do not take the Hippocratic Oath, but I am sure every one of you is fully dedicated to the protection and safety of the Alaskans you serve.

Alaskans will be ill-served by the passage of these bills into law.

Please vote "No" on SB36

Respectfully,

Oliver M. Korshin, M. D.  
General Ophthalmology  
1200 Airport Heights Drive  
Suite 310  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508  
907.276.8838

**From:** David Zumbro [mailto:dzeyemd@mail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 09, 2017 10:46 AM  
**Subject:** HB 103

Dear Senator,

I am writing again to express my opposition to HB 103 and SB 36. As currently worded, this legislation is poorly and incompletely crafted and will lead to Alaska patient harm if passed. The optometry lobby expresses quite loudly that they will not do procedures for which they are not trained. I think that is true, but in this case we need to trust but verify. That's why a clear definition of eye surgery amendment is imperative. If you look in Oklahoma, Kentucky and Louisiana, where similar legislation has been ratified, you can see quite clearly that optometrists are doing laser procedures for which they have no formal training, certification or medicine oversight. We have given you copies of journal articles which show a huge deviation in practice between optometrists and trained eye surgeons. Doesn't it make sense to you that ophthalmologists (medical doctors with formal training and continuing oversight) should take the lead in defining eye surgery?

This issue is not about respect. Respect should be earned and not legislated. It is not about access. Where is the data that access is an issue. Where is the public outcry? It is not about a turf war or economics. Again, where is the data. If economics is a consideration, then we need to look closely at the complete economic picture such as co-management and utilization issues.

Quite simply, this is about patient safety. Persons not trained in surgery or lasers should not perform or regulate such procedures. Trained personnel who are certified and licensed to perform such procedures should be regulated by the medical board. The medical board exists to oversee physicians who practice medicine and surgery. Optometry is not a surgical vocation.

Thank you for your consideration. Your constituents and our patients deserve your honest and thorough assessment to protect them.

David Zumbro, MD  
Alaska Eye Physician and Surgeon

**From:** Frank Bickford [mailto:bpgalaska@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 09, 2017 7:38 AM  
**To:** Juli Lucky <Juli.Lucky@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Legislation puts Alaska eyes at risk | Juneau Empire - Alaska's Capital City Online Newspaper

Hi Juli,

Please include if possible in Finance Committee packets, the article below.

Thank you,  
Frank

<http://juneauempire.com/opinion/2017-05-09/legislation-puts-alaska-eyes-risk#>

Frank Bickford  
Bickford Pacific Group  
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P.O. Box 91337  
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907-632-1268  
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308 G St, #317, Anchorage 99501  
208 North Franklin St, Juneau 99801 (Legislative Session only, January thru April)  
Websitebickfordpacificgroup.com

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Posted May 9, 2017 12:59 am - Updated May 9, 2017 01:07 am  
By GRIFF STEINER FOR THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

## Legislation puts Alaska eyes at risk

If the Alaska State Medical Association, Alaska State Medical Board, Alaska Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons and the American Academy of Ophthalmology all oppose legislation impacting eye care, why would Alaska lawmakers support it?

House Bill 103 will allow optometrists, who have not gone to medical school, to perform delicate surgery on and around the eye. This legislation threatens Alaskans' eye safety, thus defeating the core purpose of any legislation that involves medical care: patient safety.

Special interests are driving this dangerous legislation that is currently navigating its way to becoming law. I work with patients every day as an ophthalmologist, providing medical and surgical care, as I have for over 20 years. My training and career have provided me with a broad and deep pool of experience that heightens my grave concerns about this frightening bill. If HB 103 were signed into law, Alaskans would be subject to receiving care from optometrists outside the scope of their training. They lack the medical or surgical training to get a legislative green light to use needles, scalpels and even lasers on eyes. We need to put an end to this persistent attempt at creating bad public policy that places Alaskan's vision at risk.



All ophthalmologists train for four grueling years in medical school and a one-year internship to receive comprehensive knowledge about the entire human body. This is followed by three to five more years of full time surgical residency training specific to the eye. This leads to thousands and thousands of hours of hands on training compared to, at best, hundreds of hours of hands on training for optometrists, none of which includes surgical training!

Simply put, there are no shortcuts for learning how to safely perform these procedures. It is likely that the training that optometrists would receive to perform eye procedures would amount to a weekend course!

If you want evidence to oppose the legislation, read a recent study on the topic: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27467233>.

The National Center for Biotechnology Study, a research arm of the National Institutes of Health, investigated laser surgery in Oklahoma after their state legislature allowed a similar law to pass. The results were clear. The study found that, when performed by optometrists, patients were twice as likely to require further surgery and were almost 10 times as likely to actually receive another laser surgery, as early as 11 days later! The study concluded, "Health policy makers should be cautious about approving laser privileges for optometrists practicing in other states..." This study should significantly slow the process to allow further analysis of the impacts of optometric surgery. Considerable differences in recovery and treatment clearly exist.

As a medical doctor and as an ophthalmologist, I am legally and ethically bound to put patient safety first. Most optometrists share this commitment and duty as well. Unfortunately, some are putting the profession ahead of patient care. I have great respect for the optometric profession and support their goal of expand the purview of their own regulatory board. In fact, if this legislation defined the surgical procedures that are outside their scope of practice, there will be significant medical support for the bill, including my support. We have no issue with an expanded board of optometry, which is the original stated purpose of this bill, but until the legislation defines what procedures must not be regulated by optometry, we cannot support this action.

It should be very clear who you would allow to perform surgery on your eyes. Please contact your state senator(s) as soon as possible if you agree. This bill could pass this week!

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• **Griff Steiner, MD, is a fourth-generation Alaskan and ophthalmologist performing eye surgery in Anchorage for over 20 years.**