



NHOA GRASSROOTS ACTION

SB 440

AN ACT relative to the board of optometry
and the regulation of optometry.

LIVE PHONE SCRIPT



Script if the Representative answers the phone:

Hello, my name is _____ and I am an optometrist at practice name in town and I live in town.

I'm calling to ask for your support of SB 440 which updates the optometric practice laws in NH. It passed the ED&A Committee last week, and we anticipate a House vote on Thursday, May 23rd.

Are you familiar with the bill at all?

"Yes."

You can say: "Oh good, do you have any questions about the bill?"

"No."

You can say: The bill allows doctors of optometry to do minor in-office procedures that are taught at all optometry schools in the U.S. and are allowed in other states. As it is right now, patients need to make additional appointments and incur more costs to see an ophthalmologist or even an APRN to do what we, as doctors, have training for and could do if we were in another state.

**Consider ending the discussion with something like: "And one last thing, is that I want to warn you that you will hear some major scare tactics from ophthalmology and unfortunately, we are used to this and have heard these things for decades, every time we update our scope of practice. If any questions come up, please let me know, and I'll be happy to get the answers for you."*

If your representative does not have a phone number or you are unable to leave a message after several attempts, then please send them an email. An email example appears on the following page.

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HOUSE VOTE SAMPLE EMAIL TEXT



Take our words, make them yours!

Hello, my name is _____, and I am an optometrist at practice name in town and I live in town. I am reaching out to ask you to support SB 440, which updates the optometry statute with today's current education and training.

SB 440 will have a House floor vote on Thursday, May 23rd, and I hope you'll be there to vote in favor. SB 440 came out of the House ED&A committee with a favorable 14-6 vote. It received a majority of both Democrat and Republican support, plus SB 440 passed unanimously in the House subcommittee and unanimously out of the Senate on the consent calendar.

The goal of the bill is to improve access to eye care by reducing wait times and eliminating duplicative, costly appointments and testing by allowing optometrists to perform specific, limited, in-office procedures. All optometry colleges and universities in the United States provide comprehensive training in these in-office procedures, and they have been performed in dozens of states for more than 40 years, with safe and effective outcomes.

Becoming a Doctor of Optometry requires a 4 year undergraduate degree and an additional 4 years of rigorous classroom and clinical doctorate training, followed by national board examinations. The education focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of ocular disease conditions, including performing laser procedures and minor surgical procedures of the eyelids.

During the past several decades, healthcare education, training, and innovations have advanced exponentially to everyone's benefit, but the optometric statute in NH has not had a significant update in more than 20 years. This leaves patients needing to travel for additional appointments with additional costs, have tests repeated, and burden caretakers for procedures that Doctors of Optometry could perform in our offices if we were allowed to practice to our full licensure in New Hampshire.

Eye care access issues in this state are undeniable. We live with them every day as doctors and as patients. Doctors of Optometry are the leaders in primary eye healthcare and are at the front lines of diagnosing and delivering care. In New Hampshire, there are two counties without a single ophthalmologist, and another two counties with only a single ophthalmologist. Doctors of Optometry are the only eye care providers practicing in all 10 New Hampshire counties, providing eye care access to 100% of the state's population.

The ophthalmologists who oppose SB 440 rely on baseless claims of risk to patient safety. The same argument has been made before this legislative body, repeatedly, for decades in an effort to maintain a monopoly on certain practice modalities. None of their claims have ever come true. The American Medical Association has a national campaign called #StopScopeCreep that aims to stop advancements for any healthcare providers who do not have the MD degree. As our scope has changed over the years, the proof has been in the successful care that Doctors of Optometry have provided to our patients, and not a single optometric bill has ever been repealed.

I hope that you can support SB 440. Doctors of optometry are well equipped for what this bill allows, and the citizens of New Hampshire don't deserve to needlessly wait for referrals and endure more costs for procedures we are trained to perform.

Thank you so much for your time. I appreciate your service to our great state. I am happy to be a resource for you and answer any questions you have along the way. Feel free to call or text anytime. My cell phone number is _____.

Sincerely,