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February 11, 2020

TO: House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
FROM: Todd Fleischer, CAE
Executive Director
RE: Testimony Regarding House Bill 2506

My name is Todd Fleischer. I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Optometric Association, which represents optometrists across Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 2506.

Doctors of optometry are licensed by the Kansas State Board of Examiners in Optometry. Because the scope of practice of optometry is determined legislatively, the practice acts vary across the country. For example, Kansas optometrists have level licensure and enjoy full prescriptive authority. Other states allow for different levels of licensure and optometrists at lower levels of licensure may not be able to prescribe oral medications, which Kansas optometrists have been able to prescribe safely for decades.

When an applicant seeks licensure in Kansas, the Kansas State Board of Examiners in Optometry determines if their licensure is on par with the optometry law in Kansas, including CE requirements, years of practice, etc. If their license level is equal and they have met education requirements, there is a path to licensure in a very timely manner through reciprocity. If it is not, they offer options for that individual to meet the requirements of licensure.

Other health care fields have similar processes already in place which are designed to minimize hurdles to licensure while at the same time making sure that the health care providers can provide safe care to Kansans.

As such, we believe this bill is unnecessary and actually eliminates some of the protections put in place to protect Kansas patients. If this bill were to continue, we would encourage you to exempt health care providers from those eligible for this process.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments in opposition to House Bill 2506.

