



The Honorable Marko Lias
309 Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504

February 7, 2019

Dear Senator Lias,

For the past few years, [Americans for Vision Care Innovation](#), our bipartisan coalition of taxpayer advocates, consumer groups, think tanks and innovative companies, has worked closely with leading ophthalmologists, citizen organizations, local technology providers and innovation coalitions to oppose proposed legislation in the Washington State Legislature that would severely limit vision care telehealth services like online prescription renewal. We write today in strong opposition to yet another harmful bill that would restrict such services, [SB 5759](#), that was introduced on January 29, 2019.

To make vision care more accessible, more affordable and more convenient for consumers and taxpayers, innovative companies have developed new tools and technologies that allow for online prescription renewal and online vision checks. These tools are not designed to replace comprehensive eye exams, but rather to give consumers more options when it comes to renewing their prescriptions. However, because online prescription renewal represents a threat to the status quo and the profit-making of some optometrists, the optometric lobby has been trying to ban such services in Washington State.

Current law in Washington allows for the use of telehealth for online vision tests and prescription renewals, and these services have been in use for more than three years with no known adverse event or consumer complaint. Restricting online prescription renewal in Washington would harm consumers, who are using these new tools across the state every day to increase their access to eye care. It would also be costly for the government, which saves money when consumers use less expensive, more accessible health care solutions. Certain taxpayer-funded programs, as well as insurance plans for government employees, could also be deprived of potential savings from these innovative services and technologies.

The right to an online prescription renewal is not a partisan or political issue; it is a common-sense consumer issue. Washington's contact lens users and glasses wearers are entitled to the greatest possible degree of access, choice and convenience in the way they renew their lens prescriptions – and at the lowest possible prices. This is also an innovation issue. If SB 5759 is enacted, Washington will jeopardize its reputation as a state that has been leading the country when it comes to health care innovation.

We urge you to oppose SB 5759. We believe that legislators who have all the facts about online vision care will make the right choice for their constituents and will allow these important technologies to continue to operate in Washington. We are happy to meet with you and your staff to provide more information and demonstrate how these tools work. We also would be happy to connect legislators with leading consumer, taxpayer, medical and innovation voices from across Washington, so that you can hear their concerns first hand. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Ken McEldowney, Executive Director
Consumer Action

Pete Sepp, President
National Taxpayers Union

Lindsay Mark Lewis, Executive Director
Progressive Policy Institute

Sindy Benavides, Chief Executive Officer
League of United Latin American Citizens

Dr. Elena Rios, President and CEO
National Hispanic Medical Association

Grover Norquist, President
Americans for Tax Reform

C. Jarrett Dieterle, Director of Commercial Freedom
The R Street Institute

Dave Williams, President
Taxpayer Protection Alliance

Andrew F. Quinlan, President
Center for Freedom and Prosperity

Chuck Muth, President
Citizen Outreach

Cary Samourkachian, President and CEO
Lens.com

Yaopeng Zhou, CEO and Co-Founder
Smart Vision Labs

Dr. Steven Lee, Co-Founder and Chief Science Officer
Visibly

Allison Fleming, Vice President
1-800 Contacts