



April 29, 2019

Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat
Senate Majority Floor Leader Kim David
Senate Democratic Leader Kay Floyd
Oklahoma State Senate
2300 N. Lincoln Boulevard
State Capitol Building
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear President Treat, Majority Floor Leader David, Democratic Leader Floy and distinguished members of the Oklahoma State Senate:

[Americans for Vision Care Innovation](#) is a bipartisan coalition of taxpayer advocates, consumer groups, think tanks, and innovative companies working with leading eye doctors who have joined together to ensure consumers across the country have access to the latest cost-saving and time-saving eye care technologies. We represent the fifty million plus Americans who wear contact lenses and glasses in Oklahoma and across the country.

We are dedicated to fighting for competition, choice and lower costs when it comes to vision care and have worked across the country on both the state and federal level, fighting bans on ocular telemedicine, promoting the right for consumers to get prescriptions for contact lenses and glasses renewed online, and standing up for the Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act (FCLCA), the federal law that has been in place for more than a decade that guarantees a patient's right to their own prescription and allows them to buy contacts and glasses, wherever and whenever they want.

We are deeply concerned about what has been happening in the last few days in the Oklahoma Legislature and write today in strong opposition to SB100, a bill full of special interest giveaways, that violates federal law, denies rights for taxing glasses and contact lens consumers, prohibits competition, increases costs and bans critical innovative vision care services for Oklahoma families.

Because of the unique nature of the contact lens marketplace, in which optometrists both write a prescription and then immediately seek to sell products, federal laws and rulemakings have sought to protect contact wearers' freedom to choose where they purchase lenses. Thanks to the FCLCA, contact lens prescribers are required to give a copy of the prescription free of charge to every patient after a fitting. In addition, prescribers are required to verify the patient's prescription to any entity authorized by the patient.

The result has been less market distortion and more competition, leading to lower prices for consumers. Taxpayers have a stake in this beneficial process as well. If civilian government employees or military service people pay higher costs or lose productivity because of new purchasing regulations that restrict their choices, pressure would increase on taxpayer-backed insurance programs to cover them.

We are deeply troubled by provisions in SB100 that seek to further undermine and rollback the critical consumer, pro-competition protections of the FCLCA and benefit the optometrist lobby at the expense of Oklahoma taxpayers. We urge you to say "no" to re-regulation that would drag Americans back into the last century and force them to suffer higher prices, less convenience and heavier costs for government programs.

In addition to rolling back rights and raising costs for consumers, SB100 also seeks to stifle innovation by attempting to ban ocular telemedicine and online prescription renewal for contacts and glasses.

Online prescription renewal tests have been offered for nearly four years in Oklahoma and across the nation. During this time, close to one million prescription renewal tests have been performed using online platforms, and at this time we are unaware of a single adverse event, medical malpractice claim or consumer-initiated medical board complaint as a result of using these services.

Oklahoma's contact lens users and glasses wearers are entitled to the greatest possible degree of choice and convenience in the way they renew their lens prescriptions – and at the lowest possible prices.

Here are some other key facts you should know about online prescription renewal services for glasses and contact lens wearers:

- Consumers must have a prescription from an eye doctor in order to use these services initially. **These online technologies are designed to help get prescriptions renewed, not to replace comprehensive eye exams.**
- **These services are easy to use and are available 24 hours a day.** Your constituents no longer have to rush across town, drive for miles to the nearest city or take off work to get a prescription renewed – or worse, travel for hours if they live in a community with no eye doctors. These services are also generally far less expensive for consumers than visiting an eye care provider in person.
- Customers who use these services go through eye health screenings as part of the process and their online prescription **renewals are reviewed and approved by ophthalmologists and optometrists**, who are specifically licensed to practice in Oklahoma
- **Ophthalmologists and other members of the medical community generally oppose bans on the use of telemedicine for vision care and online vision tests.** They believe new technologies can be used safely when doctors have oversight and banning them could severely jeopardize the development of vision saving and lifesaving technologies to treat diseases.

We strongly believe that Oklahoma legislators who have all the facts about just exactly what SB100 sets out to do will stand with their constituents and fight back against this special interest giveaway. Your contact lens and glasses wearing constituents are counting on you to oppose this bill.

We are happy to speak with you and your staff in more detail at any time if you have questions about the information we present in this letter.

Sincerely,
Americans for Vision Care Innovation

