



American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Inc.

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April 11, 2016

The Honorable Pamela Althoff
Illinois State Senate
309L State Capitol
Springfield, IL 62706

The Honorable Anna Moeller
Illinois House of Representatives
249-E Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: SB 2899/HB 6166 Optometric Practice Act

Dear Senator Althoff and Representative Moeller:

It was a privilege to get to meet you both at our recent huddle with our optometry colleagues at the Thompson Center, March 31st. I am writing to you formally on behalf of the American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons. We are a group of nearly 800 practicing ophthalmic plastic surgeons dedicated exclusively to surgical disease management of eyelid, eye socket and tear drainage disorders. For many eyelid issues, the “buck stops” with our specialty. Our colleagues in dermatology, general plastic surgery, facial plastic surgery and even other general ophthalmologists recognize the complexity of working around the eyelid and commonly refer any and all eyelid pathology to a dedicated ophthalmic plastic surgeon.

Our members, after a three-year residency where eyelid surgery is first taught and performed, spend an additional two years exclusively dedicated to the periocular area where we perform a minimum of 500 procedures under direct supervision. Trainees become full-fledged members of our society after writing a thesis and passing a rigorous written and oral board examination. We are uniquely positioned through our extensive training to evaluate and treat eyelid disorders which can at their most benign include common styles but range to potentially life-threatening injuries and malignancies. We feel strongly that Illinois residents deserve to have the most highly-trained physicians and surgeons managing their unique eyelid issues. We do not feel the necessary clinical background and training can be compressed into a weekend classroom course. As we all heard during the Thompson Center meeting, the current optometry training in this area includes no hands-on surgical instruction or supervision. It is not possible to learn how to safely perform surgical procedures of any type by watching a video or observing somebody else.

We support adequate, approved training for physicians who wish to embark on surgical management in the area of eyelid surgery. At this time, that type of training simply doesn't exist. We strongly oppose SB 2899/HB 6166 and urge the General Assembly to ensure that all Illinoisans receive the quality of the surgical eyelid care they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tamara R. Fountain M.D." in a cursive script.

Tamara R. Fountain, MD
ASOPRS Vice President

TRF:to