

1 INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2017-150

2
3 REQUESTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND
4 LABOR STUDY THE TRANSFER OF REGULATORY OVERSIGHT OF OPTOMETRISTS
5 TO THE ARKANSAS STATE MEDICAL BOARD.
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7 WHEREAS, the training of an optometrist has not included training
8 consistent with ophthalmologist's education; and
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10 WHEREAS, optometrists examine, diagnose, manage, and treat conditions
11 of the human eye, lid, adnexa, and visual system, including the removal of
12 foreign bodies from the cornea, conjunctiva, lid, or adnexa; and
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14 WHEREAS, the State Board of Optometry is currently composed of seven
15 (7) members consisting of:

- 16 (1) One (1) consumer member;
17 (2) One (1) representative of the elderly; and
18 (3) Five (5) licensed optometrists; and
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20 WHEREAS, current Arkansas law does not require a member of the State
21 Board of Optometry to be a licensed ophthalmologist; and
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23 WHEREAS, the majority of the members of the State Board of Optometry do
24 not have the formal training to regulate optometrists engaging in surgical
25 procedures; and
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27 WHEREAS, the Arkansas Optometric Association Inc. has advocated that
28 optometrists practice surgical procedures that are traditionally practiced by
29 ophthalmologists; and
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31 WHEREAS, ophthalmologists perform surgical procedures and are regulated
32 by the Arkansas State Medical Board; and
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34 WHEREAS, the Arkansas State Medical Board is currently composed of
35 fourteen (14) members, with twelve (12) of the members being physicians; and
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1 WHEREAS, the General Assembly should ensure that regulation of similar
2 professions should be adequate and consistent,

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4 NOW THEREFORE,

5 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR OF
6 THE NINETY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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8 THAT the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor study:

9 (1) The transfer of regulatory oversight of optometrists from
10 the State Board of Optometry to the Arkansas State Medical Board; and

11 (2) Alternatively, the shared regulatory oversight of
12 optometrists by a joint committee composed of members of the State Board of
13 Optometry and the Arkansas State Medical Board.

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15 Respectfully submitted,

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19 Representative Stephen Magie

20 District 72

21 Prepared by: JMB/JMB
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