

Dear Committee Members,

Today I underwent a YAG laser capsulotomy. The procedure itself took only a few minutes, and I am hopeful it marks the end of a two-year effort to address damage to my left eye. What stands out, however, is not the procedure—it is the long, frustrating journey to finally receive it.

For years, I lived with blurred vision while trying to secure the care I needed. At one point, I even spent three months in Florida attempting to get an appointment through a referral from Shippee Eye Care, only to learn that the doctor there was booked more than a year out. I was fortunate that a cancellation opened up, but no one should have to rely on luck to access timely, medically necessary treatment.

Vermont's aging population means the demand for this procedure—and many others like it—will only continue to grow. At the same time, more of our physicians are leaving the state for higher wages or different climates. These trends leave Vermonters facing longer wait times, fewer options, and unnecessary barriers to care.

I do not claim to be an expert in the technical aspects of this equipment or the training required to use it. But I do know that we routinely train 16-year-olds to safely operate vehicles and technology far more complex than most of us realize. When the need is clear and the training is appropriate, we find ways to expand access.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill and allow it to move forward to the full House. Vermonters deserve timely, accessible eye care, and this legislation is a meaningful step toward ensuring they receive it.

Thank You

Sincerely

*Joe Witt*

West Burke