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Senate Health and Welfare Committee
c/o **Calysta Koppenhaver** (*she/her*)
Senate Health and Welfare
Vermont State House Room 17
Office of Legislative Counsel

RE: Senate Bill S.64

Dear Committee Members,

I recently learned that the Vermont Senate is considering the bill described below:
“Senate Bill S.64 and House Bill H.241 would authorize Vermont optometrists to perform certain advanced in-office procedures, including selective laser treatments, ocular injections and minor eyelid lesion removals”.

I strongly urge you to not support this bill. I believe that allowing optometrists to perform procedures that are beyond their training and expertise would be a threat to the vision and health of Vermonters.

The procedures described in Senate Bill S.64 should be performed by licensed Ophthalmologists, who are medical doctors with extensive education and training in diagnosing and treating eye disease and surgery. Optometrists are educated and trained to perform eye exams for the purpose of prescribing corrective lenses for eye glasses and they are not medical doctors.

I have suffered greatly from the eye care I received from a local optometrist in Brattleboro who I thought was a competent eye care professional and who performed my yearly eye exams, but did not diagnose a serious condition that would have been obvious to an ophthalmologist. As a result, 90% of my optic nerves were damaged and I am now significantly vision impaired, can't drive and have difficulty reading. (When I told the optometrist about the condition of my eyes after going to the ophthalmologist that she referred me to after realizing that something was wrong, she said “Oops”).

Please do not vote for SB S.64. Thanks for your attention.

Respectfully,
Eric Morse