



Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Proponent Testimony to Senate Bill 490

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Madam Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Elizabeth Patton, State Director of Americans for Prosperity-Kansas. On behalf of thousands of Kansas activists, we support Senate Bill 490 which modifies the scope of practice for optometrists. Senate Bill 490 would allow optometrist to perform procedures they are trained to do in optometry school. Medical technology advancements have enhanced and continue to improve for patient care and most importantly patient outcomes.

Building a patient-centered health care system that lowers costs, increase choices, and improves access for millions of people seeking relief. The reforms outlined in SB 490 to allow for full practice authority to optometrists would help promote these important goals by addressing our state's needs by empowering providers to do what they are trained to do. We have seen time and again in Kansas where access to care is not optimized because of outdated red tape on the books. Once again in this instance, our state statues have not kept up with the education and medical technology advancements for optometrists. Senate Bill 490 would increase access to care for Kansans seeking optometry treatment and would save patient time if optometrist were allowed to perform these procedures.

The other positive aspect of this bill is the workforce growth component which would allow graduate optometrists to practice the skills they are provided in their training and education. Eleven other states, including Colorado, Oklahoma, and Arkansas optometrists are allowed to perform these services for their patients.

We thank you for the opportunity to address this critical issue and we look forward to working with the Committee to craft real reforms that expand access to affordable and high-quality health care for all Kansans.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Patton

State Director

Americans for Prosperity-Kansas