*In order to maintain transparency with our membership, memos detailing the various ways the Opticians Association of America (OAA) has continued to fight for the advancement of optician's rights will be emailed in regular intervals by the legislative committee.*

In union with other member states, OAA has recently lent support for legislative bills that expand privileges, educational opportunities, and professionalism amongst opticians. One such attempt was Pennsylvania's House Bill 319 Ophthalmic Dispensing Practice and Licensure Act[1]. Although not passed, legislators in states like Pennsylvania are becoming more aware of the presence of an organized industry of united opticians and in time bills like this one will pass.

Again working with more member states, OAA has recently provided model licensing and regulatory legislation for states like Oregon[2] in order to assist those states with planned grass roots initiatives and lobbying efforts.

OAA would also like to thank Thomas Blair, Jr., President of Optician Association of Georgia, who has consistently maintained open dialogue on countless issues of importance to opticians not only in Georgia, but nationally. We use this congratulatory remark to inspire other member states and opticians to contact us more frequently with the continual hope of uniting our causes and sharing our experiences.

I will leave this memo with a blissful revelation of sorts. It appears at University of Missouri St. Louis Optometry School there are students who advocate for the ability for opticians to independently refract[3]. Some guidance was solicited from OAA on what talking points, legislation or relevant information could be obtained on this topic to bolster their position. We offered a few familiar arguments with why opticians should be able to refract along with a brief history of the struggles dealing with scope of practice. The most intriguing argument that could be made however was the fact that hundreds of optometrists and ophthalmologists have been educated in Universities[4] by the very opticians who are barred from practicing said act. Yes, there are opticians that double as professors who teach optometrists how to refract. It is quite ironic certain opticians are relied upon to instruct aspiring optometrists and ophthalmologists, yet are not afforded the right to practice the craft.

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[1] Pennsylvania HB 319 Synopsis: A bill regulating the licensure and practice of ophthalmic dispensing; establishing the State Board of Ophthalmic Dispensers; providing for its powers and duties; and providing penalties.

[2] Optician Association of Oregon, C. Dave Lien, President, contact OAA for additional support on previously discussed grass roots plans if needed. Also, for those members not in Oregon, feel free to contact OAA so we can assist efforts in your state.

[3] I should be honest, it was just one student.

[4] University of Mississippi and Pacific University; additional details of the refraction argument can be given per request.