



## **H.B. 838 — The Ophthalmic Surgical Patient Protection Act**

*Prime Sponsor: Representative John Bear*

**For patient safety, eye surgery should only be performed by trained medical doctors.**

- Changes in technology are blurring the perception of what may be considered eye surgery. Current PA law prohibits non-physicians from performing surgery, however, surgery is not clearly defined in the law. Because of this ambiguity a definition of what constitutes eye surgery is needed in order to ensure patient protection and safety.
- H.B. 838 was created specifically to remove ambiguity in the current statute **without removing anything from the current scope of practice of Optometry in Pennsylvania.**
- Optometrists do not attend medical school and they are not trained to handle the possibly life-threatening systemic complications that may complicate decisions on what patients may be candidates for surgery and when surgery should be performed. Systemic complications may also arise during or after seemingly simple surgical procedures that require the training of a physician to handle appropriately.
- The formal training of medical school, internship and residency (8 years) and the experience of treating all systemic disease conditions as well as the exposure to thousands of patients with complex eye pathology cannot be replaced by optometry school (4 years) and weekend courses.
- Most citizens of Pennsylvania are less than 25 miles, or a 40-minute car ride, away from a trained ophthalmologist. There is no access to care issue in Pennsylvania regarding eye surgery. Access to substandard care is no benefit.

**HELP PROTECT THE CITIZENS OF PENNSYLVANIA.  
PLEASE SUPPORT HB 838.**