

Statement of Linda Nocerino
Public Health Committee
HB 5760
February 26, 2006

My name is Linda Nocerino and I am here before you today to ask that a law be passed which will require all children to have a complete eye examination by an eye doctor before entering school. I urge you to pass HB 5760 because every child needs to have good vision in order to learn appropriately. I know this first hand because my son Michael's severe vision problem was not detected during pediatric vision screenings. This has caused him to suffer a huge injustice. Had he received a complete eye examination early on he would not be suffering academically at this time.

From the time my son was born to the time he entered school he had had many pediatric appointments and had regular check ups and physicals which included vision testing. Even so, not one pediatrician ever noticed that Michael might have had a vision problem. I am not saying that a pediatrician cannot find other things that may be wrong with a child, but because they are not equipped to perform a thorough eye exam, things can be missed. My son, after having a complete eye exam by an optometrist, was found to be extremely farsighted with high astigmatism. This prevented the development of depth perception and normal peripheral vision. My son has been struggling since then and is getting better gradually but is still only reading at a 2.7 grade level. He should be at a fifth grade level in reading and he has stayed behind one grade and all because no one was ever able to tell that he had a vision problem. We learn by seeing, and because that was taken away from him he is now struggling to catch up. I really think that this should be a requirement so that other children in the future do not have to suffer the way my son Michael has and still is. Please pass HB 5760 for the sake of all children.

I appreciate you allowing me to speak before you today
Thank you.

Linda Nocerino