



Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians
American Academy of Ophthalmology
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SUPPORTING Written Testimony

Submitted by:

Steven C. Thornquist, M.D.

*Legislative Chair and Past President, Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians
Associate Secretary for State Affairs, American Academy of Ophthalmology*

Before the Public Health Committee

H.B. 5625 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF SURGERY

On behalf of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the world's largest association of eye physicians and surgeons, serving more than 31,000 members worldwide, and on behalf of the Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians with its 300 ophthalmologists in the state of Connecticut, we would like to voice our support for H.B. 5625 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF SURGERY.

The medical specialty of ophthalmology has had a long history of being in the forefront of introducing pioneering technologies into the surgical suite. Because the eyes are some of the smallest and most delicate parts of the human body, new technologies that enhance fine control and miniaturization are generally placed in the hands of ophthalmologists first. The use of surgical lasers in the anterior segment of the eye and on the retina has now become the gold standard to treat certain complex conditions and diseases of the eye. Out on the cutting edge, it is becoming increasingly obvious that nanotechnology is the future of ophthalmology. For example, researchers are already developing microscopic surgical robots that can swim around inside the eye repairing delicate structures. These robots are controlled from the outside, similar to drones. Yet, these revolutions in surgical technologies do not mean that the structures of the eye are more forgiving in terms of imperfect healing or that the many surgical judgments before, during and after surgery are any less important or that the eye diseases being treated are any less serious.

HB 5625 would enact a definition of surgery that recognizes the evolving surgical technologies as well as the full spectrum of surgical training and skills required to employ these new instruments safely and effectively. We are deeply concerned that



without this definition of surgery, statutes and regulations—that were written long before these new and novel technologies were even conceived—will create unintended loopholes in the law. This lack of clarity could allow those who may not be fully trained with surgical skills and the surgical mindset, to inappropriately employ these modalities on patients. No matter how well intentioned, no one has an interest in bringing harm to a patient undergoing surgery. **HB 5625** would remove ambiguities in the law and ensure that patients are protected.

We would like to thank the committee for allowing us the opportunity to provide our insights regarding **HB 5625** and how it will strengthen Connecticut's standards of patient safety in an ever-changing healthcare environment. Once again, we ask that you support this important piece of information. Additionally, we would like to make ourselves available to provide you with any further information or answer any specific questions that members of the committee may have on this matter.

Thank you.