Testimony to the Education Committee  
Presented by Martin Sandshaw, Lions Clubs International Foundation Coordinator for District B in the State of Connecticut  
Concerning SB 1014, (Sec. 10 Concerning Vision Screening in Schools)  
March 20, 2017

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, Representative Fleischmann, Representative Lavielle and members of the Committee.

My name is Dan Uitti, of Oakville, Connecticut. I am Lions KidSight Chairman in Connecticut. I am here to support SB 1014, and in particular Section 10, to allow the use of automated screening devices in schools to screen children for eye diseases.

Our focus is to provide early vision screening opportunities in our community for preverbal infants and toddlers, preschoolers and school readiness (entering Kindergarten). We do our best to provide screenings to groups of children quickly, while they are not engaged in educational curriculum with a teacher. We can screen between 20 and 30 children per hour. Some schools are reluctant to allow the automated vision screening devices to be used by Lions Club volunteers because the law does not specifically allow them. Please change the law to include automated vision screening devices in addition to the Snellen chart.

Facts about the Lions Clubs vision screening program:

- The Lions Clubs in Connecticut operate Pediatric Vision Screenings at no cost to the school situation or families.

- The CDC (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) says, "Vision disability is the single more prevalent disabling condition among children. Blindness and vision impairment in children is often underrepresented or not represented at all as an indicator of health and quality of life."

- The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) says, "An undiagnosed or untreated vision disorder clearly leaves a child behind in the classroom... the factors related to a student's vision are significantly better predictors of academic success than is race or socioeconomic status."

- Three to five percent of the U.S. population has amblyopia or misalignment of eyes in small children. Myopia or nearsightedness has a prevalence of more than 20% in school age years.

- In all, one in four children of school age suffers from a vision issue. 70% of Children diagnosed with a learning disability have a vision issue. 80% of juvenile delinquents have a vision issue.

- Research has shown that, of the children in the 9 to 15 years age group, only 10% of those who needed glasses, actually had them.

- The failure to detect and treat vision disorders in children affects issues such as: Child development — Learning Performance — Academic achievement — Self esteem - Social emotional behavior — high school dropout rates — juvenile delinquency

- We use the latest technology screener that is easy to use by our volunteers, with a minimum of training required. It is of high value to make use of this new technology in conjunction with the Snelling Eyechart as needed.
- Tom Zang, Pediatric Practice Manager, Tenafly Pediatrics, New Jersey says:
"This is a life-changing and industry-changing new technology, it measures the eyes faster and we will be able to expand our ages, screening younger and older children. Up until now, it has been difficult to screen younger children, because they don't maintain eye contact long enough and it would be difficult to get a reliable reading.

- Dr. Hauser Weiler, Ophthalmologist, Lions International Director, Southeast Virginia
"The beauty of the high tech screening device is we can screen any age group, because it doesn't require the patient to participate. With preverbal children, or those with handicaps, the eye chart doesn't work, but with this vision screener, we can screen them for a multitude of potential problems, which is a great help.

Please support SB 1014. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this bill.

Sincerely,

Daniel Uitti
Lions KidSight Chairman, Connecticut
Oakville, CT
CT Lions Eye Research Foundation (CLERF)