

NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1967

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE,
COMMITTEE ON INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m., pursuant to notice, in room 2322, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John Jarman (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. JARMAN. The subcommittee will be in order. The hearings today are on H.R. 12843, introduced by Chairman Staggers; H.R. 586, introduced by our colleague, Mr. Friedel; and other similar bills providing for the establishment of a National Eye Institute in the National Institutes of Health.

The first bill on the subject was introduced by our colleague on the committee, Hon. Fred Rooney, of Pennsylvania.

In 1937, the Congress created the National Cancer Institute, for the purpose of establishing in the Federal Government a central focus for research into problems involving cancer.

A few years later, legislation reported out of this committee provided an expanded role for the Public Health Service in medical research through the establishment of the National Institutes of Health, through which research and training would be conducted covering the general field of diseases.

From time to time, additional institutes have been created, some under general authority contained in law, such as the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, and some through specific statutory authority, such as the National Heart Institute.

There are today a number of separate Institutes in the National Institutes of Health, covering the full range of diseases and disorders affecting man. It is inevitable, therefore, that the creation of any new Institute, whether done administratively under the authority contained in existing law, or whether done by act of Congress, will involve some transfers of functions and responsibilities from an existing Institute within the National Institutes of Health.

Basically, we are faced in these bills with the problem of whether greater efficiency will be brought about in research and training in health problems relating to vision through the creation of a separate Institute, specifically oriented towards diseases and disorders of vision, than will continue under the existing organizational structure of the National Institutes of Health.

I think it is fairly obvious that greater efficiency would be brought about in research relating to vision through the creation of a separate National Eye Institute.