

The American people stand to reap great rewards as optometry and coordinate disciplines join together to address these research questions, seek workable solutions, and implement the answers with appropriate action programs for the application of the new found knowledge.

I would like to inject here, before I conclude my statement, that optometrists of this Nation in no way wish to minimize the fact that blindness is a horrible affliction. It is. I hope to also leave with you a clear understanding that serious impairment of functional vision is likewise a difficult condition for those who suffer it, exacting a terrible toll in lost capacity, productivity and in human suffering. We optometrists would like to see full utilization of every available resource and every shred of scientific knowledge to prevent blindness and reduce or combat functional vision impairments.

Optometry is America's first line of defense against blindness. Over 70 percent of Americans who have or suspect that they have a vision problem rely upon optometrists for their visual examinations and care. It stands to reason that a profession which renders the majority of vision care in the United States has a vital stake in the establishment of any new Institute which has as its purpose—

... the conduct and support of research for new treatment and cures and training relating to blinding eye diseases and visual disorders, including research and training in the special health problems and requirements of the blind and in the basic and clinical sciences relating to the mechanism of the visual function and preservation of sight. . .

To provide the comprehensive vision research proposed by this legislation, optometric participation is required in all aspects of program planning and execution. We feel strongly that specific statutory provisions must be made for the inclusion of optometry in the National Eye Institute by Congress if Congress in its wisdom decides to enact this legislation. We herewith submit our proposed amendments.

AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 12843, PROPOSED BY THE AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

Page 2, line 11, before the word "and" insert "including optometric procedures for the improvement".

Page 2, line 24, after the word "that" insert "(1) and the Council established under this section shall include one or more members who have a Ph. D. degree in Physiological Optics; also one or more members who are licensed optometrists, and (2)".

Page 4, line 6, before the word "with" insert "including those which may be corrected by optometric procedures".

Page 4, line 10, after the word "institutions" insert "(including training, instruction, traineeships, and fellowships in optometry)".

Dr. McCrory. Thank you for your attention and for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. Rogers. Thank you very much, Dr. McCrory. Your statement is most helpful and we are delighted to see our friend Bill MacCracken here. It is always good to have him up here before the committee.

Mr. Kyros. It is nice to see you again, Dr. McCrory. I enjoyed your statement very much. I think it is an outstanding statement and I know your organization and association does an outstanding service to the United States.

If I understand your statement, you are not fully in favor of the bill as it stands. You have read the bill, Dr. McCrory?