

AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION,
St. Louis, Mo., December 28, 1967.

HON. HARLEY O. STAGGERS,
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN STAGGERS: I wish to express to you grateful appreciation for your sympathetic interest in my profession's position on the bill to create a National Eye Institute (H.R. 12843).

As documented in my testimony, we feel that many of the arguments put forth by the proponents of this legislation are weak and misleading. If this bill is just to serve the specific interests and needs of the blind, and the prevention of blindness, then we feel that this is too narrow and restrictive a purpose in terms of the projected cost and the size of the national problem. If it has a broader purpose—to cover all areas of vision—then we feel it has more merit and are certain that it will intimately affect optometry. If this institute is to be established, we feel that it should stand as a monument to the government's continuing interest in the visual welfare of *all* her citizens, and not as a monument to ophthalmology.

If the bill is to be enacted, we urge you to fight for inclusion of optometry's amendments within its provisions. Since optometrists render the major portion of eye care in America today, adequate provision must be made for the free and unfettered utilization of optometric services and optometrists in all programs administered by the institute.

I look forward to seeing you again and extend to you and yours the very best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season.

Sincerely,

V. EUGENE McCRARY, O.D.,
Director, Department of National Affairs.

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION,
Chicago, Ill., October 31, 1967.

HON. JOHN JARMAN,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Public Health and Welfare, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN JARMAN: On behalf of the American Medical Association, I would like to take this opportunity to submit Medicine's support of H.R. 12843 and similar bills. It is our understanding that these bills would amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the establishment of a National Eye Institute in the National Institutes of Health.

Although the duties of the proposed National Eye Institute are for the most part presently the responsibility of the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness, it now seems appropriate to give special emphasis to the study and research into the causes and prevention of blindness through the creation of a separate institute.

The bills before you also provide authorization to the Surgeon General to establish and maintain traineeships and fellowships in the National Eye Institute, in matters relating to the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of blinding eye diseases and visual disorders. He also would be authorized to make grants to public or other nonprofit institutions for the purpose of providing such traineeships and fellowships. We believe that this is an appropriate means of advancing our knowledge concerning the prevention and treatment of diseases of the eye.

We appreciate the opportunity of submitting our views on this legislation and request that our letter be included in the record of your hearings.

Sincerely,

F. J. L. BLASINGAME, M.D.,
Executive Vice President.

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY,
Kalamazoo, Mich., December 5, 1967.

HON. HARLEY O. STAGGERS,
Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee,
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN STAGGERS: I am writing you because of your appointment to the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee whose subcommittee on Public Health and Welfare is now involved in hearings related to the establish-