



The Connecticut Opticians Association, Inc.

The Connecticut Opticians Association monitors all activity at the State Capitol which may have an effect on consumer eyecare or have an impact on opticians within the State.

SUNSET REVIEW has been introduced as an agenda item in the 2007 Connecticut Legislature - Raised H.B. No. 6997

The Board of Examiners for Opticians will be scheduled for termination

Sunset Review Process

Connecticut's Sunset Law is spelled out under Title 2c of the Connecticut General Statutes. It lists entities and programs to be **terminated** unless specifically recreated by an act of the General Assembly. The program review committee is responsible for conducting a performance audit of each entity or program in the year preceding its scheduled termination. In conducting the review, the committee is required to consider, but is not limited to, the statutory criteria contained in C.G.S Sections 2c-7 and 2c-8.

“Well it probably had to happen sometime. Unfortunately it happened here and now. Our current licensure is being obliterated. We are going from having to be licensed and to have that licensee on the premises whether it's an OD's office or [a corporate optician], or an independent optician, to a vague definition of supervision that can be interpreted to be a phone call away. The practical test has been completely taken away. . .” - Bev Harper, Executive Secretary, Opticians Association of Alaska

In its initial and purest form, *sunset* is a mechanism under which government entities and programs are periodically reviewed and *automatically terminated* unless continued by an affirmative vote of the legislature. However, as the sunset process evolved, the focus shifted away from termination toward a surgical approach where modification or elimination of selected regulations and practices were proposed as a condition of continuing the entity or program.

The Connecticut Opticians Association has been monitoring the progress of the proposal and will certainly keep *our members* current with its anticipated impact on the Board of Examiners for Opticians. Representatives of the COA have spoken with legislators and will testify on behalf of all opticians in Connecticut.

Several states which license opticians have already been affected by their respected State Sunset legislation. ([Read the following page to learn how Sunset has affected opticians in other States](#))

The COA needs the support of all optical personal to defend the Board against Sunset. If our licensing Board is deregulated, opticianry in CT will certainly change, or cease to exist. Many opticians who are not members of the COA turn to us for support *only* in time of an anticipated legislative crisis or legal problems.

ARE YOU WILLING TO GAMBLE ON YOUR LICENSE?

Income from your dues goes towards promoting our long established objectives. There is no question, without the COA, opticianry in Connecticut has no voice. **Don't gamble with your license!** There are other groups in Connecticut that have attempted to divide our membership. When considering membership in another group, or attending seminars offered by our competition, be sure to ask yourself, where does the money go? Does it support objectives which endorse Connecticut opticianry? It is ironic that while these others groups attempt to divide the COA, we continue to support and protect their rights as opticians. And, if you've let your membership lapse, or have never joined, we still support and protect you too. Shouldn't you support us as well? We recognize the expense of COA dues. But ask yourself what would it cost you if there were significant changes to your license? **Will saving a few dollars be worth the gamble?** No other organization or individual offering CECs in Connecticut contributes anything to support opticians in Connecticut.

Whether you decide to get your credits from us or another group, please join to support the only professional Association in Connecticut which *supports you, no matter who you are, or where you practice.*

Renew your membership or join the Connecticut Opticians Association NOW !

Alaska

Alaska Division of Legislative Audit: Summary of A Sunset Review of the Department of Community and Economic Development, Board of Dispensing Opticians, September 12, 2003

Purpose: In accordance with . . . of the Alaska Statutes (sunset legislation), we have reviewed the activities of the Board of Dispensing Opticians. The purpose of this audit was to determine if there is a demonstrated public need for the continued existence of the Board of Dispensing Opticians.

In the long term, . . . the long-term viability of the Board of Dispensing Opticians (BDO) is problematic. Given these concerns, we recommend the legislature not extend the termination date for the board. Accordingly, the board will terminate operations at June 30, 2005.

Licensure for opticians in Alaska was hit hard by its recent Sunset Review. Executive Secretary for the Opticians Association of Alaska, Bev Harper, summed up her feelings, "Well it probably had to happen sometime. Unfortunately it happened here and now. Our current licensure is being obliterated. We are going from having to be licensed and to have that licensee on the premises whether it's an OD's office or [a corporate optician], or an independent optician, to a vague definition of supervision that can be interpreted to be a phone call away. The practical test has been taken completely away . . ."

Florida

On January 17, 2001, Governor Jeb Bush presented his budget to the Florida Legislature. It contained \$ 0 funding for the Florida Board of Opticianry. In his explanation of eliminating the Board's line item there was added this additional phrase: The Executive Budget proposes to eliminate 1 position and \$1,102,624 associated with the regulation of . . . opticianry professions through board consolidations, or the use of alternative regulatory models and standards . . .

Vermont

The Board of Examiners for Opticians was eliminated. Legislation included comprehensive revision of the licensing statutes and established the Office of Professional Regulation, into which are merged all licensing boards, including Opticians and . . . eliminated the five person Bd. of Examiners of Opticians . . .
This was not Sunset Legislation

Alabama

Every four years, each licensing board is brought up before the Legislature for review. This process is called the Sunset process. The Legislature must pass a piece of legislation that continues the work of the licensing board for another four years or the board will "sunset" and no longer exist.

"Opticians are waking up to the importance and value of organization. It is said that some [omitted] in the State are laying plans to put opticians out of business by special legislation." *From the Alabama State Optical Society*

HAWAII

Office of the Auditor State of Hawai'i Sunset Evaluation Update: Dispensing Opticians

Summary: We evaluated the regulation of dispensing opticians . . . and conclude that the public interest is best served by repeal of the statute. [Chapter 458 - which regulated Opticians]

Regulation of dispensing opticians is **not needed** to protect the public health and safety. . . . federal regulations already ensure product safety, and the narrow scope of the dispensing optician's practice limits risk to the consumer.

Recommendations: We recommend that Chapter 458 be sunsetted. However, if the Legislature chooses to reenact the statute, it should consider **eliminating the board and removing unnecessary and restrictive requirements, such as the practical exam, three years' working experience, and separate certificates for each business site.**