

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5632

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*As Passed House  
April 19, 1991*

**Title:** An act relating to ocularists.

**Brief Description:** Redefining what an ocularist is and his or her apprenticeship period.

**Sponsor(s):** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care  
(originally sponsored by Senators West, Niemi and Johnson).

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Health Care, April 1, 1991, DPA;  
Passed House, April 19, 1991, 98-0.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH CARE**

**Majority Report:** *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 9 members: Representatives Braddock, Chair; Day, Vice Chair; Moyer, Ranking Minority Member; Cantwell; Edmondson; Franklin; Paris; Prentice; and Sprenkle.

**Staff:** John Welsh (786-7133).

**Background:** Ocularists are health practitioners licensed by the Department of Health to design, fabricate and fit ocular prosthetic appliances or glass eyes.

An applicant for licensure must hold a high school diploma; have completed alternatively at least five years of apprenticeship training, or a prescribed course in ocularist training, or have engaged in practice outside the state for at least eight years; and have successfully passed the examination.

An ocularist may practice only upon the referral of a patient by a physician.

A person may apply to the secretary for training as an apprentice to work under the supervision of an ocularist. Apprentices must complete their apprenticeships within eight years.

There is no requirement of ocularists to explain their services to patients.

There is no advisory committee established for advising the secretary on the implementation of the licensure law.

There is no waiver provided from the examination requirement for those ocularists licensed in other states.

**Summary of Bill:** The ocularist practice act is up-dated generally.

An applicant for licensure may have a general equivalent degree in lieu of a high school diploma, and have completed 10,000 hours of apprenticeship training; or, if outside the state, a combination of training as an apprentice and experience as an ocularist.

A physician's referral is not required for replacements of glass eyes.

A person applying to the secretary as an apprentice must be registered and pay a fee, and shall work under the direct supervision of an ocularist. Apprentices must complete 10,000 hours of apprenticeship training within eight years.

Ocularists must explain their services to patients, and failure to do so constitutes unprofessional conduct.

An advisory committee, appointed by the secretary, is established. The committee is composed of a physician, an ocularist, and an employee of the department. Committee members will serve three year terms. Immunity from legal liability is accorded committee members and staff.

Licensure without examination is authorized for ocularists licensed in other states which have standards substantively equivalent to those of this state.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** The bill makes technical housekeeping changes which will permit the regulatory program to operate more efficiently.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Jeff Larsen and Jerry Erickson, Washington Society of Ocularists (pro).