

March 1, 2021

To: Members of the Health and Human Services Committee  
From: Americans for Tax Reform

Re: Support House Bill 629

Dear Representative,

On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) and our supporters across Georgia, **I urge you to support House Bill 629, legislation that would make it easier for corrective eyewear prescriptions to be renewed via telemedicine.** If implemented, **this reform would expand access to and reduce the costs of vision care services in Georgia, making it a huge win for patients, consumers, and taxpayers.**

Under the status quo in Georgia, patients must be sitting in an optometrist's or an ophthalmologist's office in order to use telemedicine for vision examinations, also known as online vision tests. This protectionist law, which was put in place by incumbent providers to shut out competition, defeats the purpose of telemedicine. Despite the fact that online vision tests can be done virtually anywhere, Georgians are still required to take off of work or school and take on the costs and complications of traveling to a doctor's office in order to use this option for prescription renewal.

Contrary to many claims, **online vision tests, which are safe and doctor approved, are not intended to replace comprehensive in-person eye exams.** Online vision tests can be used in between comprehensive exams to allow patients to renew their prescriptions more conveniently. Online vision tests also make renewing prescriptions more affordable, costing as low as \$20 while the in-person eye exams cost an average of \$185.

**Along with the many benefits it would provide to individuals, HB 629 could also lead to taxpayer savings.** Each year, the state of Georgia spends taxpayer dollars on eye care services for government employees and those who receive medical benefits from publicly funded programs. Costs could be drastically lowered if the use of telemedicine for prescription renewal were a more accessible option.

**HB 629, by tearing down government-imposed barriers to vision care, will make corrective eyewear prescription renewal more accessible and affordable for Georgia residents.** This reform would be particularly beneficial for lower income families, those living in rural areas, and for all people between ages 18 and 50, the segment of the population whose prescriptions change very little and do not require an office visit every year simply to have their prescription renewed.

**ATR supports HB 629 and urges you to vote YES.**

Sincerely,



Grover Norquist  
President  
Americans for Tax Reform

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