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Board of Examiners in Optometry
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**2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL NO: SB 175
COMMITTEE: FINANCE
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

TITLE: State Board of Examiners in Optometry – Criminal History Records Check

BILL ANALYSIS: The Bill, with amendments, would require a licensee to begin the Criminal History Records Check (CHRC) process effective January 1, 2026.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Board of Examiners in Optometry (the “Board”) supports SB 175 with amendments.

SB 175 will ensure the Board continues their mandated responsibilities of protecting the citizens of Maryland through its credentialing, examination, licensing, and disciplinary process for optometrists. There are currently fifteen health occupations Boards that require licensees to complete a criminal history records check.

The Board recognizes that its primary role is to protect the health and safety of consumers through the licensing and regulation of the practice of Optometry. SB175 will grant the Board with the ability to properly protect the public, through investigations of an applicant or licensee’s criminal history. Applicants and licensees will be required to submit a criminal history record check (CHRC) and disclose information regarding their criminal history.

The Board is working with DLS on amendments that they are recommending for clarity.

The Board of Examiners in Optometry respectfully asks for a favorable report on SB 175, with amendments.

If you require additional information, please contact the Board’s Executive Director, Gwendolyn Joyner, at 410-764-5994, or Gwendolyn.Joyner@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.