

SENATE BILL 186

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(PRE-FILED)

6lr0895

CF 6lr1033

By: Senator Augustine

Requested: September 18, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Board of Examiners in Optometry – Examination Requirements and Time**
3 **Period for Inactive Status**

4 FOR the purpose of clarifying that applicants for licensure as an optometrist and certain
5 applicants for reinstatement are required to pass all sections of each part of a
6 licensure examination; repealing the requirement that the State Board of Examiners
7 in Optometry give examinations to licensure applicants; repealing the requirement
8 that a licensure applicant pay to the Board a reexamination fee set by the Board for
9 each reexamination; prohibiting the Board from placing a licensee on inactive status
10 for more than a certain period of time; and generally relating to the State Board of
11 Examiners in Optometry.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
13 Article – Health Occupations
14 Section 11-302(e), 11-304, 11-305, and 11-310
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
18 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article – Health Occupations**

20 11-302.

21 (e) Except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, the applicant shall pass **ALL**
22 **SECTIONS OF EACH PART OF** an examination [given] **AS REQUIRED** by the Board under
23 this subtitle.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 11–304.

2 (a) An applicant who otherwise qualifies for a license is entitled to be examined
3 as provided in this section.

4 [(b) Periodically, but not more often than once every 6 months, the Board shall
5 give examinations to applicants at the times and places that the Board determines.

6 (c) The Board shall notify each qualified applicant of the time and place of
7 examination.]

8 [(d)] **(B)** (1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the Board shall
9 determine the subjects, scope, form, and passing [score for examinations administered]
10 **SCORES FOR ALL SECTIONS OF EACH PART OF AN EXAMINATION** under this subtitle.

11 (2) The subjects examined shall include:

12 (i) The anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the human eye; and
13 (ii) The use of all instruments used for examination of the human
14 eye.

15 (3) The examination may include any subject that relates to optics and
16 optometry:

17 (i) Contained in any textbook; or

18 (ii) Taught at any accredited educational institution that teaches
19 optics, optometry, and other related subjects.

20 [(e)] **(C)** [(1)] An applicant who fails the examination may take the next
21 regularly scheduled examination.

22 [(2) The applicant shall pay to the Board a reexamination fee set by the
23 Board for each reexamination.]

24 11–305.

25 (a) Subject to the provisions of this section, the Board may waive the examination
26 requirements of this title for an individual who is licensed to practice optometry in any
27 other state.

28 (b) The Board may grant a waiver under this section only if the applicant:

29 (1) Pays the application fee required by the Board under § 11–303 of this
30 subtitle;

(2) Provides adequate evidence that the applicant:

(ii) Meets the terms and conditions that the Board establishes in subsections (c) and (d) of this section;

12 (iv) Qualified for a license in the other state by passing an
13 examination given by the board of optometry in that state;

(3) Presents a copy of the license, certified by the issuing board; and

15 (4) Has not failed an examination [given] REQUIRED by the Board within
16 the previous 5 years.

17 (c) (1) The Board may waive the examination requirements of this subtitle for
18 an applicant who:

19 (i) If so required by the Board under subsection (d) of this section,
20 passes an examination [administered] **REQUIRED** by the Board; and

21 (ii) For 3 years immediately before applying, has practiced
22 optometry actively.

25 (i) Was teaching optometry;

26 (ii) Was a uniformed services optometrist;

27 (iii) Was a supervisor or administrative optometrist; or

28 (iv) Was a researcher in optometry.

29 (d) (1) Within 1 year of receipt of an application, the Board may require that
30 the applicant pass an examination.

3 11-310.

6 (i) An application for inactive status on the form required by the
7 Board; and

8 (ii) The inactive status fee set by the Board.

11 [(2)] (3) The Board shall issue a license to an individual who is on inactive
12 status if the individual:

15 (ii) Pays to the Board the reinstatement fee set by the Board.

(b) The Board may reinstate the license of an optometrist whose license has been expired for less than 5 years and who has not been put on inactive status, if the optometrist:

18 (1) Has met the continuing education requirements set by the Board;

19 (2) Meets the renewal requirements of § 11–308 of this subtitle; and

20 (3) Pays to the Board the reinstatement fee set by the Board.

21 (c) The Board may not reinstate the license of an optometrist whose license has
22 been expired for 5 years or more and who has not been put on inactive status, unless the
23 optometrist:

24 (1) Passes ALL SECTIONS OF EACH PART OF an examination
25 [administered] AS REQUIRED by the Board; and

26 (2) Otherwise meets the requirements of subsection (b) of this section.

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
28 1, 2026.