

# SENATE BILL 186

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(PRE-FILED)

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CF HB 380

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By: **Senator Augustine**

Requested: September 18, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Reassigned: Finance, January 16, 2026

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Committee Report: Favorable

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 7, 2026

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

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**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 11-302.

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

5 11-304.

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

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

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

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

15 (2) The subjects examined shall include:

16 (i) The anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the human eye; and

17 (ii) The use of all instruments used for examination of the human  
18 eye.

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

21 (i) Contained in any textbook; or

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

24 [(e) (C) [(1) An applicant who fails the examination may take the next  
25 regularly scheduled examination.

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

28 11-305.

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

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

5 (1) Pays the application fee required by the Board under § 11-303 of this  
6 subtitle;

7 (2) Provides adequate evidence that the applicant:

8 (i) Meets the qualifications otherwise required by this title,  
9 including, for 3 years before applying, the continuing education requirements of the other  
10 state in which the applicant has been practicing optometry, or, if the other state does not  
11 have any continuing education requirement, the applicant shall meet the equivalent of 3  
12 years of the continuing education requirements of this subtitle in courses approved by the  
13 Board;

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

16 (iii) At the time the applicant was licensed in the other state, was  
17 qualified to take the examination that then was required by the laws of this State; and

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

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

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

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

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

27 (ii) For 3 years immediately before applying, has practiced  
28 optometry actively.

29 (2) The Board may waive the requirement of practicing optometry actively  
30 for an applicant who for 3 years:

31 (i) Was teaching optometry;

32 (ii) Was a uniformed services optometrist;

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

2 (iv) Was a researcher in optometry.

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

5 (2) The Board shall determine the scope, form, and passing score for  
6 examinations under this section.

7 11–310.

8 (a) (1) The Board shall place a licensee on inactive status, if the licensee  
9 submits to the Board:

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

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

13 **(2) THE BOARD MAY NOT PLACE A LICENSEE ON INACTIVE STATUS**  
14 **FOR MORE THAN 6 CONSECUTIVE YEARS.**

15 ~~[(2)]~~ **(3)** The Board shall issue a license to an individual who is on inactive  
16 status if the individual:

17 (i) Meets any continuing education requirements set by the Board;  
18 and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
5 1, 2026.

Approved:

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Governor.

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President of the Senate.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.