

September 29, 2015

Senator Charles Schumer
15 Henry Street, Room 100
Binghamton, NY 13901

Dear Senator Schumer,

I am writing this letter to express my disgust in your recent appeal to the FTC regarding regulations to the "eyeglass industry." I have read about your recent efforts via the New York Daily News website. The article features a photograph of you in front of a Lenscrafters store. The average person may not understand the significance of this photo and your attempt to change "eyeglass regulations." In case you are unaware, Lenscrafters is owned by Luxottica. Luxottica is one of the world's largest eyewear companies that has deep involvement in optical goods (ophthalmic frames), vision insurance (Eyemed), retail markets (Target Optical, Sears Optical, Lenscrafters) and most recently online ophthalmic sales (glasses.com). Understanding this background, it is obvious that your recent efforts to prevent my patients from feeling "forced so they can't go online and to purchase their glasses" are truly skewed by big business lobbyist and special interest groups.

I also need to highlight a very significant double standard. As you are aware in New York State anyone who fits, adjusts or dispenses eyewear must be a licensed ophthalmic dispenser (aka optician). However, the "cheaper online" places you are supporting, are allowed to have untrained people do the tasks that my licensed optician does. If I did not operate a professional and ethical office, I too could employ minimum wage employees to "fit and dispense" glasses. However, I would not be able to sleep at night fearing that my senator would have the power to end my unethical practice. This is an inexcusable double standard that sabotages what we as professional eyecare providers do every day.

My final point is that in my small community of Cortland there are four independent, professional eyecare offices. With a quick count, these offices employ 15 licensed eyecare providers in New York (doctors and opticians). If we are not allowed to care for our patients in the most comprehensive manner you will certainly add to the Cortland unemployment numbers. Further contributing to the well documented upstate New York brain drain.

This thought process truly undermines the respectable eyecare offices that are law abiding and active employers. Any legitimate eyecare provider can explain to you the importance of accurate and quality eyewear. I invite you to visit my professional eyecare office the next time you are in Cortland. I would relish the opportunity to demonstrate the value of high quality eyecare and eyewear.

Sincerely,

Brian Sirgany, OD, FAAO
Diplomate, American Board of Optometry

cc: Senator Kirsten Gillibrand