I am a doctor of optometry, and I want to share my thoughts on the current FTC proposition to amend the Contact Lens Rule. I oppose the new FTC proposal to require that all contact lens wearing patients sign an acknowledgement of receipt of a contact lens prescription and that I keep this form on file for years. I have always complied with the requirements of the Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act (FCLCA) and the current Contact Lens Rule by providing a copy of a patient’s contact lens prescription after every contact lens evaluation. The current Contact Lens Rule should absolutely be enforced, and any optometrist that does not comply with it should face consequences. This proposed amendment to the Contact Lens Rule not only adds an unnecessary burden to the optometrists and their staff, but it also undermines the doctor-patient relationship. Having patients sign a document like this raises patient suspicion and makes them question their eye care provider from the get-go, which is unnecessary and unfair to providers. I work very hard to make sure I am honest and transparent with patients; that is how I build their trust as their provider. This proposed amendment is also a prime example of bureaucratic red tape getting in the way of providing efficient and cost-effective healthcare. There is more than enough paperwork for patients to fill out as it is; I get comments from patients every week on the amount of paperwork (HIPAA policy, financial/insurance consent, medical history, office policies, etc). This proposal adds yet another document for offices to print, train staff to explain, and find a way to store for years. Eventually, these costs trickle down to the patient, contributing to the growing problem of unaffordable healthcare in America.

I am sad to see that the FTC is not instead seeking to address the unethical and unsafe practices of online contact lens retailers. I cannot count the number of times I have had patients receive contact lenses from an expired or incorrect prescription, even though I contacted the online contact lens retailer well within the allotted time period to inform them of the issue. I have seen so many contact lens-related, sight-threatening eye infections as a result of poor regulation of these sales.

Again, I am in full agreement that the current Contact Lens Rule should be enforced, as I believe it is by the majority of optometrists. But it is unnecessary and detrimental to amend this rule as a result of the small number of eye care providers that may be breaking the rule. Please, let’s let healthcare be about healthcare.