May 15, 2019

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
2407 House Rayburn Office Building

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
1035 Longworth House Office Building

The Honorable Tom O’Halleran  
324 Cannon House Office Building

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis  
2227 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Brad Schneider  
1432 Longworth House Office Building

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick  
1722 Longworth House Office Building

The Honorable Steve Cohen  
2104 Rayburn House Office Building

Dear H.R 2620 Cosponsors:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (NAEVR), I am writing to thank you for your sponsorship of H.R. 2620, the “Faster Treatments and Cures for Eye Diseases Act.”

NAEVR, an advocacy alliance representing the vision research community—including professional societies in ophthalmology and optometry, patient and consumer groups, private funding foundations, and industry—has supported this “Eye Bond” legislation since its July 2018 introduction in the 115th Congress as it could accelerate therapies and treatments for patients that can save sight and restore vision.

A 2016 *JAMA Ophthalmology* article reported that a majority of Americans across racial and ethnic lines describe losing vision as potentially having the greatest impact on day-to-day life. Some individuals are even willing to trade years of remaining life to regain perfect vision. With vision disorders currently having the fifth highest direct medical costs, and the total annual cost of vision disorders and impairment estimated at $717 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars by year 2050, our nation must find new ways to address this growing public health problem.

As you know, the legislation has the following benefits:

- Developing more vision-saving and vision-restoring treatments and cures for the millions of Americans who experience vision impairment and eye disease;
- Funding $1 billion in critical vision-saving research that would otherwise go unfunded—that is, moving more promising treatments out of research labs and into and through human studies;
- Attracting new long-term, low-risk eye research investors such as insurance companies and pension funds;
- Protecting the taxpayer by requiring the Eye Bond grant recipients to repay the loans and ensuring that each dollar repaid first goes to reducing the taxpayer burden; and
• Having virtually no impact on the federal debt.

We commend each of you as Cosponsors for having the “vision” to create a new approach to making private eye and vision research funding dollars available that can result in new therapies to ensure the vision health of all Americans, thereby enabling productive, independent, and quality lives.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Paul Lee, MD, JD
President, NAEVR Board of Directors