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The Vision Council and Independent Optometric Alliance Groups Advocate for Affordable Vision Care and Fair Trade Policies on Capitol Hill

Optical leaders underscore the impact of tariffs on patients, independent eyecare practices, and access to essential vision care.

Alexandria, VA – January 23, 2026 – On January 21, representatives from [The Vision Council](https://www.thevisioncouncil.org), the national trade association representing manufacturers, suppliers, and retailers in the optical industry, joined independent optometric alliance groups and eyewear manufacturers on Capitol Hill to bring a unified message to lawmakers: rising costs driven by tariffs are undermining access to affordable vision care. The coalition outlined how current trade policies are increasing pressure on optical businesses, independent practices, and patients nationwide.

Industry leaders emphasized that vision care is healthcare – and that rising costs for prescription eyewear carry serious consequences for public health, educational outcomes, workforce productivity, and healthy aging. With more than 70% of Americans relying on prescription eyewear, even modest increases in out-of-pocket costs can lead patients to delay care, allowing conditions such as diabetes-related eye disease and glaucoma to go undetected.

“We appreciated the opportunity to meet with lawmakers and share real-world examples of how current trade policies are driving up costs for both businesses and patients,” said **Ashley Mills, CEO of The Vision Council**. “Prescription eyewear is classified as a Class I medical device, yet it does not receive the same tariff exemptions as other low-risk medical products. These policies are unintentionally limiting access to care, especially for children, seniors, and vulnerable populations.”

The group met with 11 Congressional offices as well as staff from the **Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee**, which have jurisdiction over healthcare policy and programs affecting access to vision care.

Other topics discussed included the challenges small and mid-sized optical companies face as they work to grow onshore manufacturing. While the industry supports the goal of strengthening domestic production, limited access to raw materials like acetate, high labor and regulatory costs, and ongoing tariffs continue to strain independent manufacturers and practices.

“Independent optometrists play a critical role in delivering accessible, high-quality eyecare in communities across the country,” said **Dave Brown, President & CEO of IDOC**. “By coming together on Capitol Hill with other optometric leaders, we’re ensuring lawmakers understand the real-world challenges our doctors face and the policies needed to protect patient access, support independent practices, and strengthen the future of optometry.”

"I think it is so important to represent our members in this advocacy effort," **said Dr. Jason Lake, General Manager, PERC/Opti-Port.** "I was very grateful for the hard work The Vision Council did in laying the groundwork to help support my members and the industry as a whole."

"Independent optometrists play a critical role in patient care and overall health," **said Dr. Justin Manning, Chief Member Experience Officer, PECAA.** "It's a privilege to share our members' stories, their challenges, and the positive patient and community impact they make through eye care with those at the highest level of government."

Industry leaders in attendance, who shared firsthand perspectives from across the optical sector, included:

Independent Optometric Alliance Groups and Eyewear Manufacturers

- Jamie Rosin, Owner, Rosin Optical Co. Inc.
- Dave Brown, CEO, IDOC
- Dr. Justin Manning, Chief Member Experience Officer, PECAA
- Dr. Jason Lake, General Manager, PERC/Opti-Port
- Jeff Duncan, General Manager, Vision Source
- Dr. Matt Alpert, Founder, TEC – The Eye Consortium
- Jim McGrann, CEO, Advancing Eyecare

Together, the group urged policymakers to pursue common-sense solutions that align trade policy with public health priorities, including tariff relief for low-risk optical medical devices and improved coordination between federal agencies. Leaders also previewed ongoing advocacy efforts, including a bipartisan congressional letter and potential legislation aimed at lowering the cost of prescription eyewear and protecting access to essential vision care for patients.

"Our members want to invest, innovate, and grow here in the United States," **Mills said.** "With the right policy alignment, we can protect patient access, support independent practices, and strengthen the domestic optical industry without placing additional burdens on families and taxpayers."

The Vision Council will continue to engage lawmakers and advocate on behalf of its more than 375 member companies to promote policies that ensure affordable access to vision care and a strong, resilient optical industry.

To learn more and get involved, visit thevisioncouncil.org.

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About The Vision Council

The Vision Council brings the power of sight to all through education, government relations, research, and technical standards. A leading advocate for the optical industry, the association positions its members to deliver the eyewear and eyecare people need to look and feel their best. Vital to health, independence and safety, better vision leads to better lives.