WHEREAS, the affiliated associations of the American Optometric Association (AOA) continue to expand the scope of optometric practice through the legislative process; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 AOA launched the Future Practice Initiative to provide resources to AOA-affiliated associations in their efforts to pass scope of practice legislation that recognizes the advances made in optometric education and post-graduate training that allow contemporary doctors of optometry to provide full-scope optometric care to their patients; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 AOA launched the Advanced Procedure and Future Practice Education Task Force to develop and provide additional educational opportunities in advanced optometric skills to students and doctors of optometry; and

WHEREAS, in the four years since the launch of the Future Practice Initiative and Advanced Procedure Future Practice Education Task Force, five states have successfully passed and enacted advanced surgical procedures and board authority provisions through legislation; and

WHEREAS, not only has advanced optometric scope nearly doubled nationwide in 4 years, but the legislation has been defended and upheld in courts and statewide ballot efforts; and
WHEREAS, 2021 and 2022 were historic years for the profession with multiple states gaining laser surgical privileges via legislative enactment; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 a total of 6 states gained greater scope of practice through legislative enactment; and

WHEREAS, the multi-year, multi-million dollar commitment AOA made to the Future Practice Initiative is dedicated to funding legislative, regulatory, public advocacy and communication efforts, and is an integral part of the success in conjunction with the statewide grassroots and volunteer efforts; and

WHEREAS, AOA is excited to continue the partnerships between AOA and AOA affiliated associations to expand patient access to care via changes to optometric scope of practice; and

WHEREAS, it is important for all state scope of optometric practice acts to be consistent with the highest level of optometric education and training; now therefore be it RESOLVED, that the AOA shall continue to encourage all affiliated associations to utilize the resources developed by the Advanced Procedure and Future Practice Education Task Force and the Future Practice Initiative; and be it further RESOLVED, that the AOA shall encourage all AOA affiliated associations to promote these resources to their members; and be it further RESOLVED, that the AOA continue to explore additional ways to assist the affiliated associations in initiatives to expand or defend their optometric practice acts.

THE FOLLOWING IS PROVIDED AS SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AS YOU CONSIDER THE ADOPTION OF THIS RESOLUTION.

POSSIBLE FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: After consultation with the AOA Secretary/Treasurer, the potential cost to the AOA of this resolution, if adopted, would be approximately: