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HB.694

LEAD DEBATE

A BILL FOR AN ACT TO REPEAL THE OPTOMETRISTS AND DISPENSING OPTICIANS (REGISTRATION, ETC.) ACT, CAP. 09, LAWS OF THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA, 2004, AND ENACT THE OPTOMETRISTS AND DISPENSING OPTICIANS REGISTRATION COUNCIL OF NIGERIA TO REGULATE THE TRAINING AND PRACTICE OF THE PROFESSION OF OPTOMETRY AND DISPENSING OPTICIANS; AND FOR RELATED MATTERS

Sponsored by
Rt. Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu

Co-Sponsors:

Hon. Shehu Saleh Rijau	**Hon. Mark Bako Useni**
Hon. Abdullahi Kalambaina	**Hon. Olumide Osoba**
Hon. Joseph Bassey	**Hon. Nasiru Shehu**
Hon. Joshua Audu Gana	**Hon Jafaru Gambo Leko**

Honourable Speaker,
Esteemed Colleagues,

INTRODUCTION

I rise to lead the debate on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to Repeal the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians (Registration, etc.) Act, Cap. 09, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, and Enact the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Registration Council of Nigeria to Regulate the Training and Practice of the Profession of Optometry and Dispensing Opticians; and for Related Matters.

2. This Bill speaks directly to the vital health and well-being of millions of Nigerians, the integrity of our primary healthcare delivery system, the eradication of quackery in eye care, and the modernization of regulatory standards governing eye health practitioners across our nation.

RATIONALE

3. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Colleagues, vision is indispensable to human dignity, productivity, and national economic development. The extant law governing optometry and dispensing opticians—the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians (Registration, etc.) Act, Cap. 09, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004—has become obsolete and inadequate to address contemporary advancements in ophthalmic science, evolving global clinical standards, and the expanding scope of visual healthcare.

4. Under the existing framework, weak statutory sanctions, insufficient regulatory mechanisms, and outmoded disciplinary structures have created

loopholes that allow quacks and untrained practitioners to imperil the eyesight of vulnerable citizens. Eye examinations, prescription of corrective lenses, vision training, and the management of minor ocular conditions require rigorous training, accredited curriculum oversight, and robust ethical policing.

5. By repealing the obsolete statute and enacting this comprehensive legislation, the Bill establishes a modernized Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Registration Council of Nigeria, institutionalizes mandatory continuing education and accredited internships, creates stringent penalties against unregistered practitioners, and establishes an effective disciplinary regime with fair hearing safeguards and direct recourse to the Federal High Court.

KEY PROVISIONS

6. The Bill comprises 30 Clauses structured across Six Parts and Three Schedules, with key provisions highlighted as follows:

- Part I: Establishment, Powers, and Governance of the Council (Clauses 1–7)
- Part II: Registration and Regulatory Oversight (Clauses 8–11)
- Part III: Privileges of Registered Persons and Offences by Unregistered Persons (Clauses 12–17)
- Part IV: Training and Quality Assurance (Clauses 18–21)
- Part V: Professional Discipline and Appellate Safeguards (Clauses 22–27)
- Part VI & Miscellaneous, Scope of Practice, and Qualifications (Clauses 28–30)
- Schedules: First to Third Schedule

CONCLUSION

7. Mr. Speaker, Esteemed Colleagues, this Bill is both timely and transformative. It safeguards our citizens from preventable blindness, aligns the governance of primary vision care with 21st-century realities, and guarantees high professional standards across private and public health facilities nationwide.

8. I therefore humbly urge my distinguished colleagues to support this Bill for second reading, and to commit it to the relevant Committee for detailed legislative scrutiny and inclusive public hearing with key healthcare stakeholders.

9. Thank you for listening and for your unflinching support.