

MEDICAL SOCIETY
of the
STATE OF NEW YORK

Elizabeth Dears, Esq.

Senior Vice President/
Chief Legislative Counsel

Division of Governmental Affairs
MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

CLICK [HERE](#) FOR BILL STATUS

S.3558 (GRIFFO)

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A.3597 (LUPARDO)

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to the licensing of orientation and mobility specialists and rehabilitation therapists

This measure would license trained rehabilitation professionals, who work with people with impaired vision, to restore their ability to independently function in their home the school, the workplace as well as in their community. **The Medical Society of the State of New York supports this bill.**

Approximately 13.5 million Americans have some form of vision impairment, even when wearing glasses. Over half of these people have a severe impairment. More than one million New Yorkers are estimated to be in this group, particularly women, minorities, and people with lower income.

Because life expectancy has increased in recent years, there has also been a rapid increase in the percentage of the population that is visually impaired due to age related vision loss from macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, cataracts, and other conditions. As a result, the need for vision rehabilitation services has also increased.

Since many resources which have been available in the past for health care and social services are no longer an option for most people, providing specially trained vision rehabilitation professionals to work with those who are visually impaired offers a dramatic improvement in the quality of their lives and allows them to be productive and self-sufficient.

This bill would provide a great expanse of vision rehabilitation services to thousands of people who are blind or partially sighted, with very different levels of needs, in the most cost-effective fashion. It will ensure that the licensees who provide these services will possess a high level of specialized skills, expertise and experience. **For the above reasons, The Medical Society of the State of New York supports this bill and urges that it be passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

5/30/13 - Support
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. **ELIZABETH DEARS KENT, ESQ**