



**Proponent Testimony on HB 189
Before the
House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
By Clara Osterhage
On
May 23, 2017**

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chairman Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on the cosmetology reforms contained in HB 189 which, as you know, is jointly sponsored by Rep. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) and Rep. Alicia Reece (D-Cincinnati).

My name is Clara Osterhage, and I am the owner of 70 licensed salons, sixty-two of which are in the State of Ohio. I understand doing business in contiguous states when licensing is involved, as the other eight salons in my organization are located in Indiana, West Virginia, and Kentucky. Most of my 750 cosmetology-licensed team members reside, work, and pay taxes here in Ohio.

In July of 2015, the Department of the Treasury Office of Economic Policy, the Council of Economic Advisers, and the Department of Labor, prepared a report entitled "Occupational Licensing: A Framework for Policymakers." In this report, the cosmetology industry was cited as an example of an industry with need for reform. The report specifically notes that required training needs to be streamlined and primarily focused on the health and safety of the consumer. It also highlights that the requirements for licensure vary substantially across States, with some requiring twice as much education as others which prohibits workers from taking their skills across state lines.

The common-sense reforms you are considering in HB 189 are necessary to position the Ohio cosmetology industry for survival with the hope of continuing to thrive. As legislators, you need to know the TRUTH about this industry in Ohio – not just from my perspective, but from the perspectives of many license holders – both individual licensees and facility licensees.

TRUTHS ABOUT THE HOURS:

- High school programs in Ohio are already at 1125 hours of cosmetology-based content. The additional 375 hours of the required 1500 are comprised of

academic-related courses – English and chemistry in the junior year and math in the senior year.

- The license pass/fail rates between high school and private schools have always been comparable.
- High school students are benefitting from taxpayer funding while most private school students find it necessary to take out student loans and many have significant debt when they become licensed and begin to work in the industry.
- As in most industries, the quality of the cosmetology candidate for hire is highly dependent on the quality of the individual, but also the quality of the program. Cosmetology instructors in public high school settings are college-degreed educators who are required to maintain credentials through the Ohio Department of Education.
- With 1000 hours as a minimum requirement, nothing would preclude schools, both public and private, from offering programs with higher hours to students.
- The states of Massachusetts and New York have a curriculum requirement of 1000 hours and many other states are moving in that direction.

TRUTHS ABOUT SCHOOL VIABILITY:

- Communities in Ohio, as well as salon owners, need great schools and educators who are passionate about this industry and about providing meaningful foundation education to the students.
- Currently, there are 175 cosmetology schools in the State of Ohio:
 - 88 high school programs (as of 9/15/16)
 - 67 private school programs (as of 5/12/17)
 - 20 adult education programs (as of 3/16/17)
- 18 private school programs have closed since 2016, many without notice to their students. These closures represent over 20 percent of the private schools in Ohio.
- There are some predictions that forty percent of private schools will ultimately close.
- Most salon owners are very concerned about potential additional school closings that are being predicted, particularly those who are already in more rural areas of Ohio. A significant number of the school closings were near the Dayton, Ohio area. I personally am working with a career tech school and a community college to offer an adult cosmetology education program to fill the void that is left from the recent school closings.
- We need more than just traditional cosmetology programs to ensure a pipeline of workers into our industry. HB 189 provides for the establishment of apprenticeship programs which will allow salons to create alternatives to formal cosmetology training and education if needed. Those salons that do not have formal school programs close by can benefit immensely – providing a new source of trained and licensed professionals.

TRUTHS ABOUT MOBILITY:

- A licensee in Richmond, Indiana who has been working in our salon there for several years and with great success worked to prepare herself to be a candidate for a manager position in our organization. She applied for a manager opening in our Eaton, Ohio salon. It took this individual nearly two months to obtain her Ohio license. Burdens of moving licenses must be removed.
- As an industry, it should matter to us that our licensees want and need the ability to move between states. Many states make it very difficult for this to happen. HB 189 provides for license-for-license exchange – if you have a valid license in another state, Ohio would accept that license and issue an Ohio license to you promptly so that you are able to continue earning a living.

TRUTHS ABOUT THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Like so many other industries, the landscape of the cosmetology industry has changed significantly in the past thirty years. It has become more vibrant than ever, and individuals choosing cosmetology now have far more career choices. While I believe that it will be a long time before consumers can get their hair cut or a skin treatment using an app, technology is becoming very important to the cosmetologists. Many in the industry are using YouTube and other online resources to learn techniques ranging from the basics to those that are more advanced. We can all expect that there will be continued growth in online learning and distance education which is also an area that HB 189 supports.

Mr. Chairman, as a proponent of HB 189, I want to reinforce my strong belief in education and the need for cosmetology licensing in Ohio. In accordance with the mission of the Ohio State Board of Cosmetology, it is imperative that providing for the safety and welfare of the consumer in Ohio remains paramount. To do so requires proper education and oversight in our laws which HB 189 accomplishes. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and I respectfully urge you to act on this bill prior to summer recess.