

May 22, 2017

Re: Bill 189

Dear Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee,

My name is Frank Schoeneman and I am CEO of Empire Education Group. We operate 88 Campuses across 21 States that specialize in Cosmetology education programs. We train and educate students in programs that range in length from 1,000 hours to 1,800 hours. As a result, I feel that I am qualified to speak about the legitimacy regarding the length and efficiency of the programs within that range.

Bill 189 which is before you for consideration is an important, innovative piece of Legislation that is at the leading edge of a nationwide reform movement. There has been much conversation regarding this Bill. It is our belief that much of the objection to Bill 189 has been focused on protecting a model that has not been revised in a number of years. That alone should be motivation to look at reform. This Legislation looks to address millennial learners and above. With the proliferation of on-line information like Facebook, You Tube and other forms of multi-media, students enter all forms of education with more than a pedestrian level of information about their career pursuits. That doesn't negate the necessity for the education; it's just a fact about our culture today.

Any claims that a reduction to 1,000 hour will compromise the education or put the general public at risk are, simply put, fabricated fantasy. We operate in two States that require a minimum of 1,000 hours and we have found that the quality of education is at least equal to that in our 1,500 or 1,800 hours states, largely because at the conclusion of their education *all graduates* are entry level employees. What we have not found is that there is a proliferation of health or safety concerns amongst clients.

A few things that bear noting:

1. We charge approximately \$12.00 per hour for our education. As a result, our overall, total charge by program is dictated by length of the state-mandated program.
2. We believe that streamlining and normalizing hours is the best strategy to pre-empt any attempts to deregulate our Industry. De-regulation would be in our opinion, a real detriment to the safety and sanitation of salon clients.

3. 1,000 hours does not create a poorly trained entry level graduate. Poor programs and/or educators do.
4. A 1,000 hour minimum requirement still allows Institutions in Ohio to offer a 1,500 hour program if that is what they feel is best for their students. Student Aid Funding rules allow schools to offer the program at up to 150% of the minimum state requirement if they feel it is educationally justified. At Empire we have a time tested viable educational model for 1,000 hours. Passing this reform Bill allows us to reduce the hours by one third ... thereby reducing the time the students spend in school. The result would be less student debt when they graduate.
5. A 1,000 hour program will allow a student to graduate approximately 3-4 months sooner. This allows our students to get to the workplace sooner, allowing them to earn more income as opposed to being in school racking up more debt.

In closing, I applaud the Committee's Leadership for continuing to take bold steps as innovators in vocational education reform. Whether a graduate chooses to pursue work in a "Mom and Pop" salon, a High End Full Service Salon or a Chain Salon, a 1,000 hour education does not eliminate those choices for their professional endeavor.

Respectfully Submitted,



Franklin Schoeneman  
CEO/Chairman