

Proponent Testimony on HB 189
Before the
House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee

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Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on the cosmetology reforms contained in HB 189, jointly sponsored by Rep. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) and Rep. Alicia Reece (D-Cincinnati). My name is Stefan Eckert and I am (franchisee/owner) of fifteen salons with 140 employees/licensees throughout Ohio.

HB 189 picks up where we left off in the 131st General Assembly with the passage of SB 213. OSA, along with many lawmakers, wanted to tackle several other issues, but we wanted to take the time to research what model occupational licensing reform legislation should look like for the cosmetology industry in all 50 states. For more than four years a group now called the Future of the Beauty Industry Coalition (FBIC) has been developing research from all 50 states to use as the basis for this legislation. The FBIC is made up of cosmetologists, students, salon owners, manufacturers, distributors, and cosmetology schools. This group came together to provide reasonable reforms to state cosmetology law rather than simply deregulating the industry.

Therefore HB 189 will:

- 1) Focus on student success**
- 2) Focus on school success**
- 3) Address administrative changes**

Student success is based on:

- Entering the beauty industry with less debt and ability to repay student loans
- Facilitating the workforce development pipeline for salons
- Providing the opportunity for individuals to start a business

This is accomplished by:

- **License for license reciprocity between states**
 - Due to regulations in several states, industry professionals cannot currently practice their craft or conduct salon business when moving across state lines.
 - License reciprocity helps newly relocated stylists get back into the workforce sooner, earning wages, paying taxes, and repaying loans

- **Requiring no more than 1,000 hours for cosmetology licensure (as in NY, MA and career tech in TX)**
 - It still takes 1,500 hours to become a cosmetologist while only 900 hours to become an EMT-Paramedic in order to save your life

 - Independent research show there is no justification for requiring more than 1,000 hours of education for licensure
 - Longer programs create greater risk for students. The more time that lapses between graduation and licensing, the more likely graduates are to drop out or “go underground.”
 - Longer programs lead to higher student loan debt. There is a significant relationship between curriculum hours and the median federal loan amount necessary to fulfill a licensure program.
 - More curriculum hours do not lead to better wages. While there is variability in mean hourly wage across states, there is no evidence showing that more curriculum hours lead to higher wages.

- **Creating a cosmetology apprenticeship program (AL, CA, TN, WI)**
 - School closings citing government regulations and increased scrutiny of industry programs is alarming. In Ohio alone, from 2016 to the present, eighteen (18) schools have closed – the Dayton area has been hardest hit
 - While this option is not intended to replace public and private education, it is needed to serve as a stop gap if, as expected, Ohio experiences more abrupt private school closings

- Change permits to allow for on-demand scheduling and working outside a salon
- Requiring independent contractors to register and not apply for a separate license
- Make specialty licenses boutique services instead of licensure

School success is based on:

- Public and private schools providing a quality education for 1,000 hours or less
- Promoting high graduation and exam passage rates with less debt for students

- Working with salon owners to develop curriculum that produces the right skills upon graduation without remedial training once in the workforce

This is accomplished by:

- Permitting pre-graduate testing by facilitating success prior to graduation
- Encouraging distance learning helps schools provide training when students need it with less overhead costs
- Giving schools maximum leeway and discretion to teach what the market demands
- Changing the advanced license to instructor license for recognition in other states

Addressing administrative changes:

- Aligning safety and sanitation rules and regulations to be consistent with known causes of infection, disease or other health threats
- Permitting cosmetologists and hair designers to utilize safety razors for grooming
- Adding an additional public member to the OSBC
- Making several recommended changes from the OSBC Executive Director and Staff

Common, sensible licensing standards are crucial to sustainable growth for our industry and protecting public safety. Together, we will build a stronger future for our industry and continue to support accountability and licensing of our professionals.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on **HB 189** to the committee. I hope this testimony has provided the members with some common sense changes and reasonable reforms for your consideration. The small business salon owners that provide employment to the graduates from Ohio schools of cosmetology are *not* seeking to deregulate the beauty industry, but to make sure state government does not unnecessarily interfere with the ability to start a business, grow a business or unnecessarily create hurdles for individuals entering the workforce to pursue a profession.

I cannot stress the importance of enacting these cosmetology reforms prior to the summer recess. Adjustments need to be made to cosmetology training programs this year so the future class of beauty industry professionals graduating from programs are ready to enter the workforce about this time next year. All eyes are on Texas and Ohio to lead the charge with these legislative changes.

You can find more information on the FBIC by going to www.futurebeautyindustrycoalition.com or the OSA website: www.ohiosalonassociation.com.

I am happy to answer any questions you have. (or for written testimony – Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony.)