

Written Testimony for HB399

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, and Ranking Member Kelly:

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to stand before you and share my heart as it relates to HB399. I am in support of the passage of HB399 for many reasons. If the required hours are reduced quite simply put, this will allow more individuals to achieve their dream and put barber colleges in a position to lower their rates. Barber colleges have long taken advantage of a situation which capitalizes on students through high tuition and haircutting rates. Barber colleges prey on students by making them believe this current structure is THE way, even though apprenticeship has been and would be a far superior choice.

My name is Jon Kardamis and I'd like to quickly share my personal story. During my time in high school and college, I taught myself how to cut hair. I've given several thousand haircuts during that time. Because I'm currently operating as a full-time artist and provider for my family, I am unable to pay for, or invest the time officially to receive an Ohio Barber license. I have checked into many barber schools in my area to see what my options are, and to say the least it's been concerning. I'd like to share with you my most reasonable option. I'd be looking at paying around \$12,000 in tuition for about a year – year and a half process. I would need to invest of my time each evening from 3-8pm, Saturdays from 9 am. – 8 pm. Saturdays are mandatory, during this entire time, you will be cutting hair as a student. Which means the \$15 student haircuts would also go directly to the school in addition to the tuition rate. With break, if your cutting hair for 10 hours, 3 haircuts an hour, 30 haircuts in a day, normally at least 20 chairs in a school. These barber colleges are profiting an additional \$9,000 at least in each Saturday. Oh, and to ensure they make maximum dollar, they charge you \$16 for every hour of a Saturday that you miss. So my daughter turns 1 coming up in February, and her Birthday lands on a Saturday. Sorry, I have to pay \$176 on top the tuition I pay to celebrate my daughter's Birthday.

Something I've read a lot about in protest to this bill, is that reducing the hours by almost half, is like getting 50% of what you paid for, well for one, I'd certainly hope these colleges wouldn't have the gall to continue charging the same rate, but nothing surprises me. In response to these weak arguments, one of the schools I was looking into, told me that because they didn't have an evening instructor that I could just work on the books and log the hours from home. Sounds like you could almost teach yourself to cut hair. Which I have.

Recently I went through the process to get my school bus driver license. Which I could easily spin that particular occupation in being one of the most dangerous and important. One that would be in dire need of having hiked regulations. I took a test to get my temps, studied and trained underneath a seasoned vet, took a rigorous test, and passed. I didn't pay tens of thousands, or log thousands of hours, in fact, I spent probably under \$300 for the whole process. So this is a dilemma that I'm grateful is being addressed. I view this as a first step towards an abused system. The barber colleges really should be ashamed.

My dream has always been to be a successful artist. I'm currently going into my sixth year as a full time artist. I received a bachelor's degree in Studio art and studied with some of the top artists across the country. You know something I learned over those years. You don't necessarily become a great artist by going to school. The Masters of art throughout the centuries learned by studying with the greats. Michelangelo was once apprenticed. I received the greatest education I could've ever dreamed of, by

studying in Nashville with the top portrait artist of our day. For this process I didn't pay a single penny. My secondary dream has been to one day own and operate my own barbershop, because I absolutely love cutting hair. There are few things that give me greater joy. However, because of hiked regulations, corrupt barber colleges, and self-important hair stylists, I may never see that come to fruition. In order to progress in life, we have to be open to beneficial change and improvement. I'm grateful for those of you who desire to improve upon a system that is in desperate need of progress. Thank you for your time.