

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee. My name is Jack Kahaian and I am a licensed Cosmetologist, Instructor and Salon Owner in the city of Delaware in Delaware county. I would express my strong support for HB277.

I have been a licensed cosmetologist since 1993. I have been an active owner an employee-based salon since 1997. I have worked in the cosmetology schools from 1989 thru 1996 as a financial aid administrator.

I can appreciate and understand both the proponent's and opponent's points of view on this proposed bill, but I believe the time to reduce the requirements is **Now!**

I believe we are experiencing what is happening across our national post-secondary education institutions. The problem is Title IV Financial aid. Our educational institutions have become slaves to the federal funds to operate their schools, without which they are likely to shrink and some fail. Our cosmetology training school have inflated their costs of education, as well as our colleges and universities. ALL students (Colleges and trade schools) are coming out with more debt than ever, entering a jobs with salaries that have not come up with the costs, because doing so will increase costs to the consumers of such services.

I would say most students feel like the hours are excessive and are not helping them better their skills to prepare for the work force. The schools do a great job at setting the basic skills needed to start and more importantly pass their licensing exams, but most every graduate has a great deal more to learn once out in the industry.

There is nothing preventing our cosmetology schools from offering a 1500-hour program and still to be able to maximize Federal aid to students if the state requirements are reduced to 1000 clock hours. It will likely create competition since schools will be able to offer 1000-hour programs.

Salon owners are stuck in a predicament also. A restrictive supply of employable workers is at epidemic levels across the nation, it is even harder for salon owners because we are vying for an even smaller group of eligible skilled labor.

**Bottom line**, 1500 hours is not necessary to give me an employee ready to enter the work force. I have hired multiple graduates from state funded vocational schools, where the student is clocking in a fraction of the hours required from private institutions, and they have been some of my best employees.

I do not want our licensing to be abolished, as fear-mongering opponents may use to motivate the licensed stylists to oppose this bill. I would venture to say, if licensing was safe, everyone would likely say 1500 hours is more than what is needed. I would be happy to employ a 1,000 hour graduate. I do not see the value from an employer's perspective in the extra training hours, I am sure many of the students would feel the same.

I could go on, but I do have a business to run. I wish I had the time and resources to testify in person, but this is the best I can do on short notice.

Chairman Stein and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to submit proponent testimony on HB 277. I do urge your support of this bill, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.