

Ciera Jacks  
Opponent Testimony HB542  
Ohio Senate Government Oversight  
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Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee, I'm Ciera Jacks and I've been an administrator for cosmetology and barber colleges for the past 8 years. I am opposed to HB 542 because I've watched so many student-journeys in my career that I'm very confident in telling when students a point of readiness... readiness for the state board exam and readiness for the future. Ohio state cosmetology and barber board requires that schools teach all material from no prior knowledge. The majority of students will not be prepared for their state board exams in 1000 hours nor will they feel confident going to test.

Students begin school with vastly different skill sets. Some have some prior experience and some have never touched shears in their life. Most have very limited customer service and business knowledge. These hands on and interpersonal skills are not honed in a textbook. It takes practice, experience, and repetition to perfect them. Exactly how much experience would students receive if the hours were reduced? Surely, the theory would not be cut from the curriculum.

Students struggle to pass the exam currently with 1800 hours. This industry is only as good as the last in the pack. Cutting the hours to 1000 hours would significantly lower the industry standard for barbers in this state. I believe I and the general public would much prefer the professional with the most hours of school experience when given the choice.

In October of 2021, the Ohio state cosmetology and barber board changed the state board barber exam to include chemical processing and color services. This directly increased the difficulty of the practical and written portion of the exam for students. If the exam is now more challenging, how can a reduction of hours not pose a problem for student preparedness? The 2022 annual report numbers for the state are not yet available, but I'm extremely curious to see if the entire state's exam pass rate has dropped from the 2020 and 2021 percentages.

Financial aid availability could also be a great factor is the graduation rate of students who are required to only complete 1000 hours. The us department of education bases financial aid program amounts off of trade school clock hours and individually monitored progress of student gpa and attendance. This is a big difference between what is defined as full-time for university students vs trade school students. Attendance percentage is not a factor for good standing at university. The weekly time allotted for a 15 credit hour semester at university requires much less of a time commitment than a 30-hour trade school week; yet they are both considered full-time. If hours are reduced, barber students may find it much more difficult to complete a program while working a full time job to support their cost of living—offsetting the missing funds that would have been offered by financial aid.

I know this first hand from working part-time while pursuing my bachelor's degree full time at 15 credit hours per semester.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I will try to answer and questions you may have.