

Carla Elig  
Opponent Testimony HB542  
Ohio Senate Government Oversight  
November 30, 2022

Good morning, thank you Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee.

My name is Carla Elig. I am a mother raising 4 children ages 8-16. I am a barber of 22 years and current administrative employee of Labarberia Institute in Mayfield Hts. I hold an instructors license and use to be a licensed manicurist as well. I managed Barber shops and salons for a decade and for several years before my last child was born I also owned a barber shop that transitioned from paying commission to booth renting.

I was only able to accomplish all of this because I was well educated in my field. And when I graduated barber school, I continued training long before continued education was required for barbers. We have to-it's the nature of our industry.

The entire hair industry is constantly changing, trending, and hustling. You have to be people's barber, their therapist and their friend person after person, day after day-and on your feet all day to boot. Our industry is not for the slackers and people who can't get a college degree. It's a choice and a lifestyle and a darn good one! But we need a solid foundation in our skills to be set up for success because it IS college. We learn more than just cutting hair. In addition to the foundations of cutting and shaving we learn the functions of all of our tools and how to care for them, biology, chemistry, business, and customer service. Less education is never the answer. Especially not in our ever changing industry.

The many facets of sanitation alone is not something to take lightly. We've been lectured to incessantly for two years about germs and now it doesn't seem to matter if we have to teach proper methods in almost half the amount of time. Our curriculum as required, focuses heavily on sanitation and the board has many laws, rules, and protocols that need to be taken seriously and given to these students in the proper manner so that they can understand and use them when they are out in the workplace. Taking away this time is an actual threat to the public. We are properly trained to use a straight razor blade which is a specific skill and a long standing tradition unique to our field. Doesn't seem like a good place to decrease education either. We are also in this short time given training on how to run our businesses whether we are booth renting, owning a shop or being paid a salary or commission, we need to learn business in this time based on current industry specific standards. And last but most certainly not least, in addition to all that, we have a moral (yet also required) duty to educate our students on recognizing the signs of human trafficking that are so prevalent in our society and sadly that pass through our industry often.

I can not think of one reasonable answer as to why so many people that have no affiliation with or experience working in our industry want to have us not be as educated as we should be. Over the last several years we've had to come here to try to defend our right to proper education from individuals who are not in our industry about "getting people out into the workforce sooner. Primary school teachers spend 12 years preparing children to go to college for another 4,6,8 years. Barbers can complete their program in less than one year and estheticians at our school with an advanced license at 750 hours enabling them to work in a medical office are out in about 5 months -with little to no debt as compared to traditional college. Yet here we are again defending our right to be properly educated by a room full of people who likely have 4 or more year degrees. 1800 hours sounds like a long time to a lot of people, which i assume is why no one ever mentions that it's only 11 months.

The barber shop is not the place for the students to have to learn basics and Apprenticeships are not for basic training and people will likely lose money paying the boards fines for improper protocols. Speaking of protocols:

Pandemic protocols nearly crippled our industry when we were shut down and not given any help during 2020. The business owners that did survive the shut downs are not going to have the time nor should they be tasked with having to train their own barbers in the workplace. These people will not be trained properly and could absolutely cause more damage than good.

Overall, it's my educated opinion that HB542 will so greatly disenfranchise our industry and could cause great damage not only to the proper education and experience of the students, who are overwhelmingly women, an ethnic minority or low income individuals but to the public as well.

As an industry professional for over 20 years, I respectfully implore you to reject this damaging degradation of our education.

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