

Proponent Testimony on HB542
By Maureen Harris
Before the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee

Chairman Roegner, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Government and Oversight Committee, I **urge your support for SB133**.

My husband, Paul and I moved to Hudson Ohio 20 years ago to start our salon business. We value the industry and the opportunities that have been provided to our family and our stylists in our salons. I would venture to say that the entire salon organization is like my family! Our organization has continued to grow. We have thirteen salons in Ohio and expanded into Florida in 2015, where we have twelve salons.

We are proud of the growth opportunities in our organization. We have three general managers, three area managers along with 25 strong salon managers. We also have added our son to the business, with the intent of being a multi-generational family business.

Watching the business and salon environment change over the last two decades has been interesting. It's clear that all businesses are evolving and that's why I support **HB542**. I believe the changes in **HB542** are reflective of different market dynamics and different education models. I have felt like the licensing burdens seemed unreasonable.

Over the years, I have heard about the stress of testing, the burden of loans, and the frustration with reciprocity requirements. With my career, once I had my education, I was easily able to move to five states for promotions and could grow my career without any burden or requirement from the state. I worked in credit reporting and marketing services.

And operating in Ohio with both public and private school students along with Florida, I believe the skills are comparable and it's easy to support 1,000 hours as the right number. Basically, public schools in Ohio allow students to work in salons at about 975-1,000 hours. Florida students are licensed at 1,250 hours, but they have hundreds of hours on the floor in the school's salon. The additional hours over 1,000 hours just increases debt and the time that's required for students to start earning a living.

I can also confidently state that there is no wage difference with public school and private school students in Ohio and licensed stylists in Florida. Any difference in wages is more reflective of the market, not the hours of their education. I believe this is a great career and we should reduce barriers. The earning potential is strong and staff in my organization far exceed any averages shared in testimony. I am proud of the wages and benefits of our employees

I support this legislative reform:

Pre-graduate testing:

- 30% of students who complete school never get licensed. Pre-graduate testing allows the students to get the extra help they need so they can retake the test and pass the first time. It also expedites a license for those who can move more quickly through the education and licensing.
- Obtaining a license is important to students. That's what they worked for so let's make it more possible for them to achieve their career goal.

Mobility/Reciprocity:

- According to census data in 2019 nearly 31 million people or 9.8% of Americans moved every year. They should be able to easily transfer the skills and continue to earn a living.
- Career opportunities in cosmetology have continued to improve and change. Mobility would allow stylists to take advantage of those opportunities in Ohio.
- Stylists in good standing with a valid license and work experience should be able to easily move into the state of Ohio.

Reduction in hours:

- There is significant and meaningful data in real life experiences that support 1,000 hours of education being adequate for stylist licensing. There are over 100 million people in states that license stylists at 1,000 hours.
- There is a significant difference in the time and debt comparing 1,000 hours and 1,500 hours. Both loans and Pell Grants are equally available at 1,000 and 1,500. There is a difference in the amount because it is less time! The funding is proportional...1,000 hours takes only nine months and 1,500 hours takes 13 months. So, in addition to the additional costs and the additional debt, they also lose four months of earnings.
- A significant study completed by AIR in 2016 concluded that longer hours did not impact any outcomes related to completion, exam pass rates, or wages.
- The focus of any state license should be to ensure the health and safety of consumers. Licensure is for entry-level skills. Students in 1,000-hour programs receive the same safety and infection control training as students in higher hour programs.

I feel strongly about the career and opportunities in cosmetology. I believe that we need to reduce barriers and provide these opportunities to more people. There are great careers available in every part of the industry...let's make it easier for them to get started in cosmetology and grow their careers.

Respectfully,

Maureen Harris