

Proponent Testimony on HB542  
By Barbara Russell  
Before the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee  
November 29, 2022

Chairman Roegner, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Government and Oversight Committee, I urge your support for HB542.

My name is Barbara Russell and I operate 32 salons with my husband.. I have been in the industry for almost two decades and work side-by-side with about 220 talented, professional stylists. We have grown our business with their input, support, skills, and commitment. They value the opportunities they have had and I'm grateful for every stylist in our organization.

I share the passion and energy of the industry and simply love the business. And I would venture to say, that the strength of our organization is a culture where personal friendships and relationships drive our success. It often feels like there's a belief that large organizations can't have an incredible culture and belief in one another. I can assure you it is possible and it's what we strive for every day in our organization. I am proud of the opportunities and growth that we have been able to provide stylists over the last 20 years.

I support HB542 because I believe that the playing field should be level. Students in the Career Tech system have the ability to start working in the salon at about 975 to 1,000 hours. I work with these stylists in our salons. They are just as competent as stylists coming out of the 1,500-hour programs. I also value both private and public education. Every education system has public and private because we want a choice. But one should not demean the other and we should treat all graduates with great respect and admiration.

The requirements should also be consistent. If you go to a four-year public college and a four-year private college, you only go four years. You don't go for six years if you attend a private college. But that's what we're doing in Ohio, with the difference between public and private school hours' requirements. And just as with other post-secondary options, additional hours should be available and funded. Schools should have the opportunity to increase their hours' requirement and market programs with a distinct differentiation. Stylists should have great choices available to them.

As a lifelong resident of Ohio, I also encourage you to look at the mobility elements as well, to encourage folks to come to Ohio and work. Let's make it as easy as we can for them to transfer their license into Ohio.

I share the following support:

Reduction in hours to 1,000:

- Career tech/public schools throughout the country and several states are successful at 1,000 hours. This is a floor, not a ceiling.
- Students should have a choice to attend private or public schools at 1,000 hours. Every hour over 1,000 has extra cost and time. Schools could still offer 1,500 hour programs.
- Longer cosmetology programs impose a significant barrier to entry for disenfranchised populations (minorities and women) who seek a career in cosmetology, especially working moms. 47% of salon businesses are owned by minorities and 77% are owned by women.

Pre-graduate testing:

- Pre-graduate testing and other testing support allows students to successfully complete their education.
- Over 30% of students that complete school do not successfully take the test and pass. Pre-graduate testing would allow them to get the additional training they need to become fully licensed.
- The license has meaning...but fear and lack of confidence creates this gap. Pre-graduate testing could prevent this.

Mobility/ Reciprocity:

- Experienced, well-trained stylists can struggle with the reciprocity process. License for license exchange takes away the extra steps and potential barriers.
- Ohio has great opportunities for licensed stylists. Let's encourage their careers by getting them licensed immediately.

I have great respect for both public and private schools and my business is successful because of public school graduates and private school graduates. Please reduce the barriers for all students by passing HB542.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Barbara Russell