

Proponent Testimony on HB542
By Lorie Cathcart
Before the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
November, 2022

Chairman Roegner, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Government and Oversight Committee, as a resident of Ohio, a salon owner, and your constituent, I **urge your support for HB542**.

I told my mother when I was six years old that I wanted to be a cosmetologist. My neighbor was her cosmetologist and I wanted to be “like Clara”. My mom passed away when I was 16, so she did not get to see my success as a cosmetologist. I graduated from high school and cosmetology school when I was 18. I received my license when I was 19. Because of my license I was able to support my disabled husband and disabled son. My cosmetology license allowed me to provide for my family.

I am passionate and committed to this industry. I have been a licensed stylist for almost four decades. I have been a technical trainer, an educator (both corporate and private school), and a salon owner. I became a salon owner in 2007 and currently have 49 licensed stylists working in my salons. I am proud to work side-by-side with them and I listen to them every day. I have had students work as receptionists. I hear the concerns about graduating, becoming licensed, and managing the expenses/debt.

Reform needs to happen in our industry. Cosmetology licensing and education has been the same for decades. Our industry needs to remove barriers to attract more students to this incredible career. We can attract more students, help them get licensed and keep them in the industry.

This legislation levels the educational playing field. Public high schools around the nation and in Ohio already have graduates at around 1,000 hours of cosmetology education. They pass the state licensure exam at the same rate as higher hour students.

Reducing hours does not limit reciprocity with other states. The reciprocity rules vary dramatically and are changing all the time. Keeping hours at 1,500 hours does not guarantee reciprocity in other 1,500-hour states. This legislation allows license endorsement for those seeking to transfer their license to Ohio. Hair is hair...it doesn't change from one state to another. Reducing the burden of transferring a license to Ohio will make it easier to live and work in our great state. Arizona, Florida and Illinois have passed similar legislation.

With 1,000-hour programs, stylists would get to work more quickly, earning a great wage. Let's do what's right for students and stylists by passing this legislation. This legislation covers three meaningful changes: a reduction in hours, pre-graduate testing, and improved mobility. I believe these changes focus on what's most important to students and future beauty and barber professionals.

I urge you to support HB542. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Lorie Cathcart