

Opposition Testimony HB 58: 135th Ohio General Assembly

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member McNally, and members of the Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide opposition testimony for HB 58, the Boutique Services Opportunity Act.

I am Ladosha Wright, a member of the Ohio Barber and Beauty Alliance, cosmetologist, and salon owner.

The plight of textured hair in Ohio and America has its roots in the systems, casts, and stereotypes associated with and assigned to race. This plight pathed the path of the term “natural” hair. The term “natural” hair is as pseudo as race.

HB 58 ignores, divides, and isolates. Ignorance, divisiveness, and isolation do not provide any opportunities. Natural hairstyling is basically an anti-chemical movement with stolen hairstyling techniques from cosmetology. Regardless of its popularity, it is without merit. In the world of hair and the sciences, natural hairstyling will never last the gamut. It will never garner the international business recognition and acumen that good old-fashioned hairstyling does with and without chemicals for all humans with and without hair. That is what cosmetology offers.

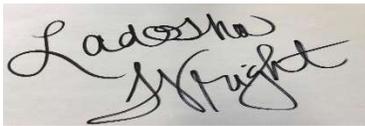
The very act of introducing a bill that references the manipulation and intertwining of Afro hair as “niche” is quite telling. Given the anthropological position of Afro hair in the scope of humanity that Africans were the first to people the planet. So did their hair. Afro hair birthed coily, wavy, and straight hair textures. Again, this bill has no merit in the science of hair, skin, and the business of hair salons. Straight hair is not first. Afro hair is not 4c hair. People of African descent do not own natural hair no more than White people own straight hair and blue eyes. Per the words of one of America’s most dedicated African American activists, the late Randall Robinson, “in the black community, we need better representation to get people to know what they need to know.” From the looks of the person who introduced HB 58, that representation is void. To the African American proponents of the bill, you too are void of the reality that again, niche services are hairstyles taught in cosmetology schools, rather you use a chemical or not.

“Natural” hair is pop culture, trend, fashion, and sensationalism. It was promoted by a “natural” hair movement on social media whose play failed. And now they want to encroach

on the cosmetology industry. These people are mad about racism. Unfortunately, they have convoluted racism with their lack of understanding about Afro hair. These natural hair enthusiasts are autodidacts who are ignorant to the various African cultural hairstyling techniques that are backed and regulated by their associated African governments. These natural hair people are in denial that yes, you must be committed to pay for knowledge and skills, rather you want to or not. You don't deregulate what you don't want to learn and pay for.

In closing, did you know this bill sends all kinds of messages that are in extreme opposites of the ethos of Afro hair. For example, to the millions of people pursuing the C.R.O.W.N Act, "your hairstyles are not worthy of the unique tapestry cosmetology offers its customers. Go to your cousin's house. Let her do it." The other bad message, popular opinion powered by Google searches, social media, and AI are reserved the for angry Black people with natural hair. You know "those" kind who manipulate and guilt White politicians who know nothing about Afro hair to do their deed in the name of free enterprise of Americans for prosperity and freedom from the government. The same government that regulates meat, produce, airplanes and funds the recoveries of natural disasters, not natural hair?

Consider my words and experience. Please vote no.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Lashana Wright" in a cursive, flowing script. The first name "Lashana" is written on the top line, and the last name "Wright" is written on the bottom line, with the two names connected by a large, sweeping flourish.