

Ohio House State and Local Government Committee
Kelly Jo McCarthy- Opponent Testimony
Occupational License Review Report
HB 238
November 28, 2023

Dear Chairwoman John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan and Members of the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee, I respectfully request that you amend the Occupational License Review Report pending before this committee, specifically removing the recommendation of a reduction to educational hours for Cosmetology, Barbering, Esthetics, Manicuring and the elimination the Hair Designer licenses, all Advanced licenses and the Boutique Services Registration. Cosmetology, including branches of cosmetology, education has been frequently contested since the 132nd General Assembly in 2017. Proposed changes to cosmetology hours should be considered as part of standalone legislation in order to ensure that all voices can be heard and the considerations fully vetted.

Within this report, there are 15 different occupations, none of which are being affected as dramatically as the Cosmetology industry. While most areas are proposing minor fee changes or license extensions, Cosmetology is facing a change of 90%, with a 47% in license elimination. That is essentially cutting down our licensure options by half.

This not only impacts our industry, but Ohio as a whole. The Cosmetology and Barber board is self-sustained, through fees generated from initial licensure, renewal fees, fines, etc. All of the boards fees are deposited into the Occupational and Professional Licensing Fund, or 4K90 fund. In the boards 2023 fiscal year report, they brought in 4 million dollars over their expenses. By reducing almost half of the licenses, that will greatly impact the amount of money that the board brings in through exam fees, initial licensure and biannual renewal fees.

Reducing licensure is not necessary in our industry, as each license holds a different purpose. Advanced licensure not only allows you as a student to learn more and gain more experience before becoming licensed, but it is a requirement in order to obtain an instructor's license. A hair designer license is an option that allows for those who do not want to include skin or nail theory into their training, and this licensures hours were just reduced in the budget bill. There has not even been enough time to implement these changes or gauge their affect and now it's being proposed to eliminate this license completely. All licensees and prospective licensees deserve the ability to have a choice in their licensure and education.

As for education, the proposal to reduce initial licensure education is not beneficial to anyone. It is not beneficial to the students, who need as much theoretical and practical training as possible before becoming professionals, and it is not beneficial to the general public, who could be severely hurt and impacted by a professional with a lack of proper education. The amount of education required to properly equip someone before they can become a professional should not constantly be up for questioning. Less education can never be a benefit to anyone.

Without proper training, students will not be prepared to enter a competitive workforce. Less time in school equates to not only less information being given, but also less time to become competent enough in their skills. This will not only force them to spend more money and time seeking additional learning and training after school, but will also greatly impact their self-esteem, confidence and ability to earn a better living for themselves. The time to build their confidence and competency is during school, before they are expected by their clients and their employers to perform at a stylist's level. Most salons cannot afford the time or money it will take

to train new graduates to the level they need to be at in order to function independently. So the majority of our current salon owners, who are mostly women, will not be able to fill employment vacancies.

Our students deserve the opportunity to become skillful in their trade, so that when they become licensed, they have actual opportunity. Opportunity to gain desired employment, become business owners or work for themselves, which the majority of our industry does. The impact will not only affect our future professionals, but also the public that we serve, who are under the assumption that when they go to receive a service from a licensed professional, that that person is qualified to be providing these services.

It is not only about the talent behind them either. The tools we work with, chemicals we apply and procedures we offer require a vast knowledge and training on how to use them properly, as well as time to retain and hone the information and skill. We can cause severe damage if we're not properly trained and educated. We need time to not only teach techniques, but also safety, proper disinfection procedures and infection control, so that our future professionals are not spreading diseases, hurting or severely harming the public.

Our industry also deserves choices. They deserve the choice of transferring their license out of state if they choose to move. Reducing hour requirements would reduce the opportunity for reciprocity to only 5 states, none of which even border Ohio.

Our current industry professionals also deserve to protect the value of the licenses they hold and worked so hard for. As a member of the beauty and barber industry, we ask that you protect our profession from this legislation which is intended to flood the market with minimally trained licensees to benefit a few powerful interests that do not represent the vast majority of voices in our profession.

Thank you for your consideration.