

HB 238 Testimony

Thank you, Chairwoman John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee. I'm Ciera Jacks, and I've been an administrator for cosmetology and barber colleges for the past 9 years. I am opposed to HB 238 because this bill misperceives education versus regulation. For some of the committee, this may be the first time you have seen us or heard our stance on education reduction. We appreciate your time today and ask that you sincerely consider all sides of this debate to make an informed decision.

I have had the displeasure of participating in this conversation before this topic was initially proposed in an unsuccessful bill in 2017—should education be reduced in the barber and beauty industry? Since that time, hordes of barbers and cosmetologists have repeatedly flocked to the State House multiple times per year to testify against the reduction of education in this industry. Just this year alone, I have testified 3 other times on this same subject and urged our legislators to stop seeking a solution where there is no problem. Less education is never the answer. This industry is thriving and never has been stronger. The current education standards have produced more small business owners with an upward trend year-over-year. The large salons and barbershops of yesterday are now small studios that host solo entrepreneurs who are strong and confident in running their own small business. They are willing and capable. This is a direct product of education in this industry. We must be doing something right. Why change it? The Ohio State Cosmetology and Barber Board, who is responsible for setting the standard for the safety of the public, recommends education hours remain exactly as they are. No improvements necessary.

Now you may say you are not aware of any language that reduces barber education hours in HB 238. That is true... only to a point. Let us note that a report was issued to this committee on November 15th with concerning language that seeks to do just that—reduce the education hours for barbers from 1800 hours to 1500 hours. I am asking that you do not include any of this language in the bill and pass it as a clean bill. *See report below:*

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STATE COSMETOLOGY AND BARBER BOARD

Barber license	Reduce initial education hours to 1,500. Extend license duration to three years. Eliminate continuing education requirement.
Barber Teacher or Assistant Teacher license	Teacher: Reduce initial fee to \$75. Extend license duration to four years with a \$150 fee. Assistant: Eliminate.
Cosmetologist license	Reduce initial education hours to 1,260.
Esthetician license	Reduce initial education hours to 500.

Hair Designer license	Eliminate.
Manicurist license	Reduce initial education hours to 150.
Natural Hair Stylist license	No Change.
Advanced Cosmetologist license	Eliminate.
Advanced Esthetician license	Eliminate.
Advanced Hair Designer license	Eliminate.
Advanced Manicurist license	Eliminate.
Advanced Natural Hair Stylist license	Eliminate.
Cosmetology Instructor license	Reduce initial fee to \$25. Reduce renewal fee to \$50.
Esthetics Instructor license	Reduce initial fee to \$25. Reduce renewal fee to \$50.
Hair Design Instructor license	Eliminate.
Manicurist Instructor license	Reduce initial fee to \$25. Reduce renewal fee to \$50.
Natural Hair Style Instructor license	Reduce initial fee to \$25. Reduce renewal fee to \$50.
Temporary Pre-Examination Work permit	No Change.
Temporary Special Occasion Work permit	No Change.
Boutique Services Registration	Eliminate.

Back to the debate at hand. Education versus regulation—two separate topics; one bill. I understand that rules and laws evolve as our environment grows and changes. All the same, I know of no industry that has ever felt they prefer to hire professionals with less education. How is that beneficial to anyone? Let us keep our focus on regulation and how we can better serve the public. Reducing education is not a regulatory issue; it's actually related to workforce development. This challenge has presented itself in several bills over the years because there are large chain salons hurting, bleeding for employees to work for them. Would it be farfetched to think these educated, young graduates are too smart and primed to work for a chain salon when they can create their own successful small business?

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Would it be easier to hire less educated, self-doubting graduates in these chain salons? There is literally a barber shop and salon around every corner within walking distance, and more are popping up every day. This is a direct correlation of an increase in workforce and education. More shops equals more barbers working smarter and not harder. It's the capitalist and American dream. Another note, why is it our government's task to fix the chain salons' employment problems? If they have trouble hiring employees, shouldn't they update their business model to be more attractive to today's professionals?

Another argument for reduction of hours is that other states have done it successfully. Well, that depends. How do we define success, and when has Ohio ever been a follower? Likewise, the incidences of public complaints is much higher in those states with lower education hours versus Ohio. Let's concern ourselves with maintaining the safety of Ohio's public and fostering a smarter and ever improving workforce in the barber industry. Take care of home. Reducing education will condense the barber industry from artists down to people who can 'safely' use shears. I'll ask the community behind me. Raise your hand if you are satisfied with just a safe haircut... no matter the outcome. You can lower your hands. Now raise your hands if you'd prefer a safe, precise, detailed cut from a barber who has put in the dedication and hours to master this skill. I can't fathom who wouldn't want that, other than chain salon owners.

Lastly, I'll address the stigma that cost decreases with less education. Question: When has price ever decreased as time progressed? Can you name one instance in which you can buy something now for less than it was 2 years ago? Let's look at education. In fast tracked nursing programs graduates are scheduled to complete a year sooner than regular paced programs; does an accelerated program cost less than a regular one? The answer remains no and with good reason. Students do not pay for the journey, they pay for the end result. If hours are reduced, the journey will look different, but the ultimate goal will still be an Ohio State Barber License. I'll also add that the average student debt for barbers is miniscule compared to that of professionals with bachelor's degrees from universities. I would know. I'm a byproduct of immense student loan debt after getting my degree. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I will try to answer any questions you may have.