



**The Ohio Barber and  
Beauty Alliance**

**TESTIMONY OF THE OHIO BARBER AND BEAUTY ALLIANCE ON H.B. 238  
BEFORE THE STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT CMTE 06 DEC 2023**

Thank you for your leadership in continuing to find ways for licensed Ohioans to provide the value of their work to the people of Ohio. Regulatory reforms are always important to be considered to benefit the cost structure of Ohio's businesses and consumers. My name is Jim Trakas, former Director of the Board of Cosmetology, and current legislative agent for the Barber and Beauty Alliance.

OBBA represents barbers, schools of barbering, cosmetologists, as well as owners of related businesses. We take a comprehensive view of the industry and assure that it is a vibrant industry. There are over 10,000 licensed barber shops and cosmetology salons in Ohio and over 120,000 licensed professionals offering services throughout the state. There is literally no city, town, or village in Ohio where there is not an opportunity for licensed professionals to provide services for Ohioans within a short drive or walk. Not one.

With respect to H.B. 238, the State and Local Government Committee issued a report earlier this month that made recommendations to the State Cosmetology and Barber Board regulation. Much of that report were areas of common sense including a reduction in fees for Barbers. However, several areas of deep contention were included in the report that our organization wanted to bring to your attention.

First off, recall that hours reductions have been fiercely debated over the last 6 General Assemblies. They have all been categorically rejected. In the debate on H.B. 33 earlier this year, a compromise was struck to allow for a 1,000 Cosmetology Hair Designer license to satisfy concerns that out of state chain salons have raised about hiring license professionals. We urge the Committee to allow that process to continue, let the chains recruit students into the 1,000 COS license, see how that works out over time.

Respectfully, we ask that The House consider H.B. 238 without radical changes to the hours and continuing education standards of barbers and

cosmetologists. If the anti-education crowd wants to present stand-alone legislation to accommodate their narrow business model, we are happy to have that debate, but H.B. 238 is not the place for that. This has nothing to do with regulatory reform, which is an important priority of the General Assembly, and could be jeopardized by the inclusion of hours reductions, arbitrarily assigned and without substantial and meaningful debate. Any time debate is held on this topic, it dies out, but we welcome debate and the chance to educate our elected officials on the value of education and appropriate workforce preparation. This General Assembly is spending billions of taxpayer dollars on workforce training, the beauty industry is already on top of this, we have some of the best skilled and prepared graduates in the world ready to serve clients, we should be proud of that fact.

We certainly thank Committee Chairwoman John and bill sponsor Rep. Fowler Arthur for their willingness to listen. Educational hours were established decades ago at the recommendation of the State Barber and Cosmetology Board and after years of empirical evidence to justify the educational standards involved, and having hundreds of licensed professionals, the entire regulated industry, weigh in on these standards. The regulatory boards brought these standards to the General Assembly, not the other way around. A clean H.B. 238 will make common sense changes to regulation, and if a deeper dive on educational standards is warranted, that should happen by stand-alone legislation that deals with that topic so that the industry, consumers, regulators can weigh in in earnest over a sustained period of hearings to help the Legislature with that process.

We respectfully ask that you ask the Committee to consider a clean bill without hours and continuing education elimination and reduction and allow for actual reforms that benefit the entire industry to move forward.