

Thank you chairwoman Roegner, vice chair Antani, ranking member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Ohio Senate Government Oversight 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 SB 89 because I've watched so many student-journeys in my career.

An important point—

Again, we've driven all the way from Cleveland at the last minute for this hearing, and I feel like it's pointless to even give my testimony and here's why:

Last Wednesday, language to reduce barber education from 1800 hours to 1000 hours was randomly added into a bill which has nothing to do with barber education. This has happened multiple times per year since the barber and cosmetology boards merged in 2017. With 9 years of experience working with students in this industry, I've watched this topic get reintroduced in legislation year after year.

Why does this continue to come up in legislation? Proponents say it is to reduce the burden of the cost of education on students. I strongly disagree because the majority of students attending traditional colleges accrue far more debt than students attending barber college; that is the real student debt crisis. Rather, this bill's underlying motive is that struggling franchises (like Great Clips) are struggling for employees because our industry produces thriving entrepreneurs, not low-income, entry level workers. Passing this bill will hinder skilled professionals from being independent and force them to work for less at these mass-produced great clips-like shops. The number one reason students enter the barber industry is to work for themselves. And will students even be prepared to run their own business at 1000 hours or will they not have a choice but to work for someone else? This sounds like an attack on solopreneurs and support of a monopoly.

I mentioned that I've watched several student-journeys in my career such that I'm very confident in telling when students are at a point of readiness... readiness for the state board exam and readiness for their future career. Ohio state cosmetology and barber board requires that schools teach all material from no prior knowledge. The majority of students will not be prepared for their state board exams in 1000 hours nor will they feel confident going to test.

Students begin school with vastly different skill sets. Some have some prior experience and some have never touched shears in their life. Most have very limited customer service and business knowledge. These hands on and interpersonal skills are not honed in a textbook. It takes practice, experience, and repetition to perfect them. Exactly how much experience would students receive if the hours were reduced? Surely, the theory would not be cut from the curriculum.

Students struggle to pass the exam currently with 1800 hours. This industry is only as good as the last in the pack. Cutting the hours to 1000 hours would significantly lower the industry standard for barbers in this state. I believe I and the general public would

much prefer the professional with the most hours of school experience when given the choice for a service.

In October of 2021, the Ohio state cosmetology and barber board changed the state board barber exam to include chemical processing and color services. This directly increased the difficulty of the practical and written portion of the exam for students. If the exam is now more challenging, how can a reduction of hours not pose a problem for student preparedness?

Financial aid availability would also be a factor determining the graduation rate of students who are required to only complete 1000 hours. The us department of education bases programs' financial aid amounts off of trade school clock hours and individually monitored progress of student gpa and attendance. This is a big difference between what is defined as full-time for university students vs trade school students. Attendance percentage is not a factor for good standing at university. The weekly time allotted for a 15 credit hour semester at university requires much less of a time commitment than a 30-hour trade school week; yet they are both considered full-time. If hours are reduced, barber students may find it much more difficult to complete a program while working a full time job to support their cost of living—offsetting the missing funds that would have been offered by financial aid. I know this first hand from working part-time while pursuing my bachelor's degree full time at 15 credit hours per semester.

The last time this topic was brought up in legislation, a proponent mentioned that schools can increase the program hours above the state minimum: I'd like to give clarity and add a little background info to that regard. Accredited schools that provide financial aid are required to give more than just-cause for raising the hours above the state minimum which is extremely hard to do and get approved for aid. That means that students may pay for any additives beyond the state minimum requirement because it is not covered by financial aid.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I will try to answer any questions you may have.