



**The Ohio Barber and
Beauty Alliance**

**TESTIMONY OF JIM TRAKAS BEFORE THE OHIO SENATE
GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY 27 SEP 23
S.B. 89**

Greetings Chair Roegner, Vice Chairman Antani, Ranking Member and Members of the Committee. My name is Jim Trakas representing the Ohio Barber and Beauty Alliance and former Executive Director of the State Board of Cosmetology. I am testifying on S.B. 89 in opposition to the amendment lowering educational instruction standards that does not belong in the Cosmetology Compact, the original subject of this legislation.

The only reason that Section 4713 of the Revised Code defines standards for licensure through clock hours in barbering and cosmetology is because the Barber Board and Board of Cosmetology determined those standards after years of the industries' growth. The two Boards, established in 1934 and '33 respectively, had decades of experience to establish clock hour standards. These two boards periodically asked the General Assembly to codify this vast experience and expertise into law, and those standards have stood for decades.

I call upon this history because it is important to understand who established the current standards and why. Barbering and Cosmetology educational standards are not the product of what some other state does, or what this interest group or that wants you to do. Educational standards were established by the governing boards that have been established by statute to oversee these industries. The current law is the work product of those experts.

Just one week ago, State Board testified at its 5-year review in The Ohio House. The Board prepared its mandatory questionnaire. The Board was asked what aspects of state law it would like to see changed, and the written answer is that H.B. 159, pending in this committee, was the only change to law it sought. Further, the Board was asked if there were any other changes to state law that need to be made? The answer, and I quote, "The Board has not recommended any statutory changes. We believe the current statutes uphold the standards necessary to protect and benefit the public."

The Board is constituted to regulate the beauty industry. They have 40 professionals working daily that know this industry in and out. The work for the people of Ohio, they have no motivation other than to oversee the standards of this industry. The Board is responsible for the Revised Code standards on clock hours, and they are not recommending any changes to law.

Maybe we should listen to the people whom we entrust with this responsibility? It is a state agency, an extension of this body's authority.

Another important matter to address is the fact that the beauty industry is very appropriately regulated. It costs very little to comply with Board regulations. The regulatory structure is based on infection control, safety and handling of professional tools and chemicals.

Education is not only not a deterrent but an advantage for licensed professionals. The educational hours established by State Board and codified in law account for about a year or less of education. That is it. A few months out of the life of a person who is then qualified to establish their entire career in the profession that they are called to.

You may recall that this hours discussion was placed into H.B. 33, the state operating budget. After back and forth with the House, the massive reduction in education was removed, and a 1,000-

hour Hair Designer License was established. Thus far 10 Ohioans have applied to go to school for this license. The Hair Designer license trains students on both haircuts, color, and chemicals. So, for those whose business models have not been able to attract or retain sufficient workers, they can now start recruiting these individuals. At 130,000 licensed professionals, with 12,000 new graduates every year, there is no shortage of workers – literally every community in Ohio has a barber shop or salon- so there is not a worker shortage, but perhaps some have not created an attractive enough workplace to retain or attract workers. Serious question, have you ever not been able to get a hair service? Aside from the pandemic, I may have had to wait a day or two, but I have always been able to get my haircut and know nobody who cannot.

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee, there is not a true correlation between adopting a multi-state compact and throwing in a reduction of training hours. I urge that the hours amendment does not go forward so that the bill can. I would note that there is no talk of reducing law school from 3 years to 2. Or medical school from 7 to 4 years. Or a college degree program from 4 to 2.5 years. Why not? Well, because education is not meaningless, it is the great equalizer for people of all races, creeds, colors, sexes to be able to earn a meaningful living in a pursuit of their own passion. We know from every meaningful labor statistic that less educated Americans make less money than more educated Americans. Barbering and Cosmetology are these professionals' passions, and they gain these life skills in one year or less in school and then are qualified to live their dream.

Please don't take away the tools for people to earn a decent living. Please amend SB 89 to make it a clean bill. If State Board comes to you with changes to the law, that should be seriously considered, but they are not, and they are the body responsible for this industry. I suggest we listen to them. Thank you for your time and attention and all you do for the people of Ohio.