

Opponent Testimony re: SB 89
Before The Government Oversight Committee
Ashley Weeks, Licensed Managing Cosmetologist,
Licensed Cosmetology Instructor
September 27, 2023

Chairperson Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson,
Members Lang and McColley.

My name is Ashley Weeks, I am 25 years old and I am currently an instructor for Ohio State School of Cosmetology. I am testifying in opposition to SB 89.

Reducing the required hours to become a licensed cosmetologist not only would pose a risk to the public we serve, but it devalues our current licenses and would strip away potential opportunities for newer licensees. The license holders that fight with me in opposition of this bill did not work so hard, for many years, just for it to be stripped away and forgotten about.

I started teaching because it has and will always be a goal of mine to educate, inspire and help be a role model for people of all ages and walks of life. Reducing the required hours to graduate as a cosmetologist to 1000 hours is not only devaluing and degrading to our industry, but it also deprives our future students of the education they EACH deserve. We want our students and new licensees to be able to support themselves and their families. We want our students to be reliant on themselves and their skill rather than a corporate industry that tells them what to

charge, what services they can and can't practice, what hours they should be working and especially how much money they should be making.

I have worked in a salon ever since I was 16 years old. I went to school for cosmetology to prove everyone wrong. Countless people had told me that it was an easy way out for people that couldn't make it through college. So I vowed to become an expert in my field and share my knowledge with others. Nobody should leave school feeling so vulnerable that they feel like they need to rely on anyone else to be successful. As an industry, as a state, as human beings, we should be encouraging each other and allowing one another to be able to be the BEST we can be. We should not be funneling individuals into an industry that allows the pockets of those who do not know us to become fuller, while we struggle to survive with smaller wages.

We are not JUST hairdressers, we don't just "cut" hair. We learn people skills, chemistry, infection control, techniques that are always changing and evolving, problem solving skills, business planning, marketing, the list goes on and on. My hard work as well as my fellow licensees' hard work should not be devalued. Our future licensees should not be set up to feel unprepared, undervalued and under-educated.

Not three months have passed since the last attempt to lower cosmetology requirements. We are sick of being slipped into the middle of a bill in hopes that it goes unnoticed. We are sick of feeling like we have no say. If the scariest thing to those who are pushing for these changes are other individuals becoming more successful, more independent and having more recognition for their skillset as cosmetologists, then you should be scared. We are unstoppable, creative, hard

working individuals. We will make sure that everyone knows that the people pressing for lower hour requirements, the people offering false promises, and contracts that sneakily restrict individuals potential earnings, have never and will never have anyone's best interest at heart except for themselves.

We will continue to fight, we will continue to teach and we will continue to strive for greatness. We matter, our education matters, our licenses matter, and our experience matters. As a female dominated industry, we should not have to plead for the legislature to value us, when daily, we prove our worth by being successful.

I appreciate your consideration and I hope that as human beings you can think about your daughters, granddaughters, nieces, and sisters, and ask yourself, "Would you be enraged if their passion, career and livelihood was constantly being questioned, devalued and undermined?"

Thank you for this opportunity to speak, and I will answer any questions you may have.

Ashley Weeks