

Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Regina Scott. I am an educator for Columbus City Schools within the Career Technical Education Department. I work at Columbus Downtown High School as a Career Technical Academic Specialist. I am strongly supportive of HB158.

Being a high school graduate of a career center program in Ashtabula, Ohio, I had the opportunity of choosing a business program to advance my career. I now understand the importance of providing every possible opportunity for students to learn a new skill or trade that will allow them a lifelong career.

One of my job duties is to be an information agent. I have the privilege of speaking with elementary, middle, and high school students about the many career programs Columbus Downtown High School and Fort Hayes Career Center has to offer. Every year, sophomores from across the district visit the career centers to see if a certain career program piques their interest. Columbus Downtown HS houses the Cosmetology Program. During sophomore visits, I have had many students tour the Cosmetology program thinking it was a Barber program, when it's not. What was heartbreaking was when a dad and son walked in the door to visit a Barber program that does not exist. At that moment, I vowed to do everything in my power to help bring a Barber program to Columbus City Schools.

In my quest to start a Barber program, I knew I needed to show data that our students indeed want a Barber program. With the help of colleagues, we surveyed 9th and 10th grade students from the Columbus City Schools high schools during the 2022-2023 school year. We found that of the 243 high school students surveyed, 63% are interested in becoming barbers. A student from Eastmoor Academy and I quote she stated, "I'm interested in obtaining new skills to better myself and I think I'll have fun becoming a barber." A student from Briggs HS stated, "Being a barber is my one and only dream. I started cutting hair last year and I've been progressing."

Our school is backed by a newly formed active Barber Advisory Board of 20 plus members. Several barbers from our board created a change.org petition and distributed flyers to see if our Central Ohio community thinks we should have a barber program in the schools. Within one month of the 2023 survey, 1,193 signatures were obtained. Our students, our barber professionals, and our community have spoken. This is a need that we can no longer ignore. Career centers and high schools from across the great state of Ohio cannot create a successful barber program unless HB158 is passed.

I ask that you take my testimony into consideration and support this student life changing bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.