

*Charles
Penzone*

**Written Proponent Testimony on HB 399
Before the
House State & Local Government Committee
By
Charles Penzone
On
January 29, 2020**

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and distinguished members of the House State & Local Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 399.

I'll provide a brief overview of my experience in the beauty industry for those of you I have not had the pleasure of meeting. I was born and raised in Grandview Heights, Ohio. I have lived in Ohio for over 70 years. I have been a licensed cosmetologist for 53 years. I am currently serving in my 5th appointment as a member on the Ohio State Cosmetology and Barber Board. In that capacity, I am serving my fifth Governor and am in my 20th year on that board. This written proponent testimony on HB 399 is provided in my personal capacity and not in my capacity as a board member. In 1969, at the age of 23, I opened my first salon in Upper Arlington, Ohio with three employees. By 1991, my vision of full service, suburban, freestanding salons and day spas became a reality. My wife, Debra, and I have grown the company to 475 employees, providing 300,000 client visits per year in six salon/day spa locations. Over the past 50 years I have owned the company; I would guess that I have provided 8,000 to 10,000 jobs to Ohio residents. At one time, the two largest salons in the US, and probably the world, were in Columbus, Ohio. I'm sure we are in the top 5 largest today. Our company has been featured on the Today Show, Inside Edition, People Magazine and every publication in the beauty industry, and, as well, most fashion publications in the US. The US government has done a video on us that was shown in over 80 countries in 5 languages.

Some awards bestowed upon me during my career in the industry:

- Ernst & Young- Master Entrepreneur of the Year
- Central Ohio Business Hall of Fame Laureate
- Global Salon Business Awards- Entrepreneur Of the Year
- International Salon/Spa Business Network- Lifetime Achievement Award
- The Central Ohio Family Business of the Year Award (Twice)

There are many more. I don't mention these awards to be braggadocios, but rather, in the hope that you will take me seriously. I'm providing this testimony in my individual capacity as a long-time participant in Ohio's cosmetology industry. **HB 399** is a critical piece of legislation that I urge you to pass. I outline several reasons why below.

The current governmental climate with respect to the beauty industry is concerning. The beauty industry is being targeted by the federal government and state regulators to make changes to streamline the entry process to our profession. Additionally, school closings citing government regulations and increased scrutiny of industry programs is alarming. The industry must come together with one voice to enact change; if we fail to advocate for our industry, the result could lead to deregulation of our industry licenses, which will negatively affect our students, business owners, and consumers.

Deregulation will harm the industry's commitment to educating students about proper health and sanitation standards. This will place consumers at risk and jeopardize their safety. Common, sensible licensing standards are crucial to sustainable growth for our industry and protecting public safety. Together, we will build a stronger future for our industry and continue to support accountability and licensing of our professionals.

Through important reforms contained in **HB 399**, we are creating career and entrepreneurial opportunities, protecting students from excessive debt, guiding students into the workforce faster, supporting our licensed professionals, and helping employers meet the demands of a growing industry while also maintaining the high standards that protect and serve the public. Accomplishing these goals requires streamlining of standards relating to licensing, education, and testing while maintaining high standards for health and public safety.

Common sense licensing standards without unnecessary government overregulation are crucial to growing our industry and protecting public safety.

National data shows economic contributions of the professional beauty industry in the United States are far-reaching and significant. The industry supports 2 million direct and indirect jobs, generates more than \$85.8 billion in sales, pays nearly \$31.6 billion in wages and contributes nearly \$3.8 billion in income taxes. Beauty professional jobs are expected to grow at a rate well above the 11-13% national average for all industries. The industry also supports small businesses and minorities. Legislative reform is necessary to protect our valuable industry.

Ohio is leading the charge to bring common-sense cosmetology licensing reform nationally. In Ohio, once passed, **HB 399** will:

- Focus on student success in entering the beauty industry with less debt and ability to repay student loans.
- Facilitate workforce development pipeline for salons, large and small.
- Foster entrepreneurship making it easier for licensed professionals to start their own businesses.

There are some that say that fewer hours will create greater harm to the public. But, New York and Massachusetts have been at 1,000 hours since the 1940s and Vermont and Texas lowered

their hours to 1,000 within the last 2 years, and no harm to the public has been identified in those states. But, consider that there are currently around 8,500,000 Ohio citizens over the age of twelve. The average person, in that demographic, visits a barber shop/beauty salon approximately 6 times per year. That equates to 51,000,000 visits to salons and barber shops in Ohio. I ask you Representatives, are you aware of any life threatening occurrences in beauty salons/barber shops? Sure, an occasional bad haircut but, have you ever heard of anyone dying? In my 53 years, I can only think that a beauty salon or barber shop is one of the safest and most pleasant places on earth and will continue to be at a lower state required cosmetology licensure of 1,000 hours.

Common, sensible licensing standards are crucial to sustainable growth for our industry, while continuing to protect public safety. HB 399 is a strong example of reasonable legislation that directly addresses concerns of over-regulation of state-mandated occupational licensing, and will create meaningful changes to archaic cosmetology licensing laws that desperately need reform.

I hope I can count on your support for this initiative. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 399.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles A. Penzone".

Charles A. Penzone
Chairman
The Charles Penzone Salons