



## HOUSE BILL 399 – COSMETOLOGY LICENSURE

### PROPONENT TESTIMONY

#### OHIO STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

JANUARY 29, 2020

Chairman Wiggam, Vice-Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee, my name is Chris Ferruso. I am here on behalf of the nearly 22,000 governing members of the National Federation of Independent Business in Ohio (NFIB) to lend our support for House Bill 399, legislation bringing common sense reforms to Ohio's cosmetology laws. We applaud Representative Powell for introducing this bill.

By way of background, a typical NFIB member in Ohio employs 25 or fewer and does less than \$2 million in annual sales. Our members come from every industry type, and our organization looks like Main Street in any legislative district across Ohio.

In addition to our public policy work, we also have the NFIB Research Foundation which is constantly surveying our members on a host of topics. Our quadrennial publication *Problems & Priorities*, captures our members' responses to a list of 75 small business issues, asking them to rank them based upon the biggest impediment to job creation/expansion/growth. Unreasonable government regulations has climbed to number two in the rankings. Our members have great concerns regarding the barriers that are preserved or erected that are impeding their ability to expand and grow their operations.

House Bill 399 adopts meaningful reform for the cosmetology industry. Today's requirements to obtain a license can serve as a hindrance to individuals seeking a career in this field. We believe the 1,000 hours contemplated in House Bill 399 is an appropriate balance between proper training and public safety all while lessening the financial burden for students. An important point to note is House Bill 399 establishes hours to satisfy licensure by the state. If there are unique or special programs offered requiring further training, House Bill 399 does not preclude such a program from operating. Let the individual decide if he or she wants to pursue such opportunities.

Of course, we want to ensure the safety of the public and we feel this reasonable reduction in hours will not diminish these goals. Massachusetts, New York, Texas, and Vermont have

reduced their hours to 1,000. Why not have Ohio be a leader instead of a follower in modernizing licensure? Let's serve as a beacon to attract individuals here, where we encourage citizens to learn or bring their skills to Ohio, thus increasing Ohio tax revenue and supporting local communities.

Additionally, with respect to public health and safety, ultimate accountability remains with the salons and establishments where licensed cosmetologists are practicing. I believe it stands to reason that any business owner is not going to subject him or herself to potential liability by allowing less than qualified individuals to serve their customers. It would be an unwise business practice to do so.

NFIB's interest in this legislation is to ensure our laws are not overly burdensome and serve as barriers to individual pursuing their passions. We recently conducted a workforce development survey of our membership and 75 percent responding indicated they are having difficulty filling open positions. I can't stand here before you and pretend House Bill 399 is a panacea for all of our members' hiring issues, but this bill and hopefully its passage serves as part of the solution to addressing workforce shortages. We have heard from some of our members in this industry who believe enactment of House Bill 399 will help fill their workforce needs.

We also feel it is important to create an environment that attracts new individuals into an industry where they can complete appropriate training and enter their desired field of practice sooner and at less cost. For many, obtaining a cosmetology license fosters the entrepreneurial spirit of someday starting one's own business. By modernizing Ohio's training requirements to better reflect what we have heard from those in the trade, Ohio will send a strong message to these potential new business owners that their skills are needed, valued, and important.

We view House Bill 399 as the next step in Ohio's continuing review of our licensure and regulatory environment. House Bill 399 provides meaningful reform to Ohio's cosmetology laws. The bill ensures proper training requirements and protects the safety of the public while reducing overly burdensome government requirements that discourage entrepreneurship and potentially leave individuals with larger amounts of debt. Ohio has the opportunity to be a leader. We encourage swift passage of House Bill 399.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to try and address any questions the committee may have.