

Opposition Testimony on HB 399
Before the House State and Local Government Committee
By: Waverly Willis
February 19, 2020

To: Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the House State and Local Government Committee:

Hello my name is Waverly Willis .I am the owner of Urban Kutz Barbershop which has 2 locations in business for 11 years. Let this document reflect that I am absolutely against House Bill 399 & Senate Bill 245. These bills will not help out the barber or cosmetology industry in any way. When I graduated from barber college & became a licensed barber I was no way near prepared for the barber industry . Since I have owned my business for the past 11 years I have never encountered a barber fresh out of school that had a proper skill set & practical knowledge of the barber industry. I was not prepared & these young barbers were not prepared because 1800 hours is not enough for anyone to be a success coming out of the gate. The changes that our opposition want to make are unrealistic and will destroy our industries. They are attempting to produce 10 dollar an hour workers instead of owners of their own.

I have a a checkered past growing up in the streets of Cleveland. I have sold drugs & made lots of money. I also became addicted to drugs to the point that I was homeless, sleeping in abandoned buildings & smoking cigarette butts off the ground . I've done things in my past that I definitely am not proud of. I learned a lot & today I am in recovery & have been for 15 years. I share my past mistakes with the youth through my non profit The Urban Barber Association (TUBA) ,which was formed & molded from a platform that was created through barbering. Hopefully they will learn from my mistakes. If I would have graduated from barber school & would have only been equipped to work in a 10 dollar an hour job at Best Cuts ,Sports Clips or other chain shops I would have went right back to the streets because that is not a good self sustaining income. I know for a fact that I would be dead or in prison if it was not for barber industry & more importantly as it pertains to these bills, the barber industry & how it is structured now ,to see the people like me, the underdogs win.

My colleagues in the barber industry & I have spoke about relocating to other states. It is great to know that as the hours are right now at 1800 it would be a smooth transition into another state. We have also heard the myth of education being to high & they want to save the students money by lowering the hours requirement. Please let it be known that if they lower the hours, they lower the education & YOU WILL NOT LOWER THE COST. They will have to spend all types of OUT OF POCKET MONEY because their skill set will not be good enough to work in any shop besides a chain shop. They will not be equipped to serve all clients & THEY DEFINITELY WILL NOT BE IN THE POSITION TO OPEN THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

As a Black man I am so pleased that I can make a good quality income that affords my family and I everything that we need & much of what we want. African Americans men & women owned businesses are popping up all over & we are thriving, taking trips with our families and helping other minorities to do the same. These changes are step backwards. I feel like the powers that be see us blossoming as and this is obviously taking money out of their pockets. We want to see more business owners. The opposition not only wants but needs workers in their businesses & these bills are the answer to their labor shortage problem.

Why are they trying to fix what is not broke. Please put an end to this nonsense & let the small small businesses continue to thrive.

Let me if this is cool. I'm doing this on the go between appointments

Waverly Willis, Change agent
If it is meant to be it is up to me.