



Representative Jena Powell
Ohio's 80th House District

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Ohio House Commerce & Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on HB 277.

HB 277, the Cosmetology Reform Act, will comprehensively reform Ohio's cosmetology and barber licensing laws.

This bill seeks to:

- 1) Focus on cosmetology student success to enter the beauty industry with less debt and greater ability to repay student loans;
- 2) Remove barriers to success for aspiring cosmetologists and barbers, mostly women and minorities;
- 3) Create a more flexible education and testing scenario (especially in light of COVID-19).

We will accomplish these goals in HB 277 by:

- Reducing the minimum hour requirement by the state to receive a cosmetology or barber license
 - For cosmetologists, 1000 instead of 1500 hours
 - For hair designers, 800 instead of 1200 hours
 - For barbers, 1000 instead of 1800 hours
 - Also reduces the hour requirements for those who already have one type of cosmetology license and are hoping to get licensed in another area of cosmetology (from 1000 to 400)
- Providing for out-of-state license recognition
- Allowing for pre-graduate testing, so students that are ready to take the exam can do so after completing most of their clock hours
- Allowing barber & cosmetology schools to utilize distance learning or classroom education for fulfilling education requirements
- Requiring the Ohio Cosmetology & Barbering Board to approve additional testing facilities across the state where a student can go to take the written exam.

- Currently, Ohioans are forced to drive to the one approved testing facility in Ohio which is in Grove City, an incredible inconvenience for a majority of Ohioans

Other states – Texas, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, and most recently, California (on the Governor’s desk) – have their cosmetology hour requirement at 1000 hours.

Currently in Ohio, high school career tech programs are already teaching cosmetology coursework for 1,125 hours. The additional 375 hours to meet the state requirement of 1500 hours are math, science, etc. High school programs also promote students doing internships with on-the-job training for up to 150 hours. This means that currently, there are Ohio cosmetologists who have received less than 1000 hours of cosmetology education and are licensed. A national study conducted by AIR concluded that any amount required over 1000 hours for a cosmetology license does not lead to higher graduation rates, licensure rates, or earning potential.

I have passed out the current hour requirements from the Ohio Cosmetology & Barbering Board for you to see. As you will notice, there are 750 hours of clinic time for cosmetologists, in addition to 375 hours of flexible learning hours and 375 hours of theory. Did you know that these 750 hours of work that aspiring cosmetologists do to cut, color, and style hair are unpaid? In fact, Ohio cosmetology students are paying Ohio private cosmetology schools for the chance to cut hair on paying customers in the schools’ on-site clinics. The schools get free labor from the students, and are paid by both student and customer.

Did you know that a cosmetology education costs an average Ohio student \$22,250? The accessibility of PELL grants and federal financial aid has increased the cost that schools charge students and the amount of debt students take on in order to complete school. However, only 26.2% of students graduate on time (within twelve months), which means schools increase the tuition for these students yet again.

We have an opportunity here to remove barriers to success for Ohio’s aspiring cosmetologists and barbers, to help them start earning money for their hard work, and to reduce the financial burden of cosmetology or barber school.

As most of you have heard me say, I am on a mission to make Ohio the most business-friendly state in the nation. One of the biggest steps we can take in that direction is to stop overregulating individuals in our state. It is time we move forward to make Ohio a more attractive place for individuals to live, work, play, and raise families in our communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present HB 277, the Cosmetology Reform Act, and I am happy to answer any questions from the Committee at this time.