

Written Testimony of Megan Davis in Support of HB 433

May 18, 2022

Dear Chair Wiggam and Members of the House State and Local Government Center,

My name is Megan Davis and I own The Kitchen Salon, a natural hair salon business in Toledo. My business provides hair care services, with an emphasis on braiding and loc styling, to customers. I ask that you please support HB 433.

The Kitchen Salon started in 2007 as a resource for natural hair in Ohio when I identified the need for this space. Over the years, I have hosted over 50 workshops and events in partnership with community organizations, schools, and churches because they could not find anyone knowledgeable or skilled in this subject. I started the first-of-its-kind Ohio Natural Hair, Health & Beauty Expo which connected African American braiders, locticians, and other natural hair specific businesses to consumers. The goal of the expo was to share information and resources with attendees to fill the gap in the natural hair styling curriculum. After the success of the expo, I founded my salon because consumers in the community could not find salons that provided natural hair services. I began researching natural hair licensing in 2012 and even attended cosmetology school. To my dismay, I discovered that there was no curriculum to support the care and styling of African American hair, specifically natural braiding and twisting techniques. This was a great concern since 98% of my clients are African American. I could not complete school because I have a permanently disabled daughter, and another child with health conditions that must be closely monitored whose health often pulls me from work or school and requires me to be home. Offering braiding and locking services, when I am able, helps to support our household and I have been able to teach these skills to my 4 daughters and 3 sons. The skills that are acquired to braid, twist, and loc hair is something passed down from mothers, grandmothers and aunts-it is a generational and cultural gift.

For 5 years, I have traveled here to address the complicated process of establishing rules that work for natural hair stylists to include braiders and locticians. I have come each year because adequate reform has not been achieved. We have drafted bills that have made clarifications that have been misunderstood and subsequently cast out. I am here to help bring clarity to why reform is necessary. The current laws and rules are complex and incomplete, specifically regarding African American haircare. Further, Ohio's cosmetology board currently requires more hours of study than Ohio's nursing board for Licensed Practical Nurses. The excessive hours of study excludes natural hair styling such as braiding, although Ohio still has a requirement in place with only one school listed that is said to offer this training course which does not include the services I provide. Braiding does not require chemicals. What I do is not a hazard to the environment or the individuals I serve. It is a safe practice, but despite its safety, the state requires braiders to either be licensed or registered as a boutique salon.

Braiding businesses contribute to our community. We provide jobs and our employees can earn a good living braiding. This helps support working families in Ohio and build wealth, and teaches lifelong skills that can be used when traditional employment is not an option. Our

businesses help our customers, who value our services. If the law does not change, braiding businesses will continue to struggle to operate in Ohio. Please support our business and braiding entrepreneurs' freedom to use their skill and experience to earn a living. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Please support HB 433.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Megan Davis
Founder, The Kitchen Salon