

## **Personal Testimony in support of Senate Bill 133**

Chairman Rulli and members of the Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee:

My name is Patty Schopp, I currently reside in Lancaster, Ohio in Fairfield County and I am a 2005 graduate of the Aveda Institute of Columbus. I have been a licensed cosmetologist for almost 16 years and have held my independent contractors license for almost 11 of those years.

I currently work as a Bridal Specialist with a small business here in Columbus and I am the Director of Membership and Communications for the Ohio Salon Association. I am here to show my overwhelming support for Senate Bill 133 presented by Senator Kristina Roegner.

I support Senate Bill 133 for the following reasons:

- The cosmetology and barbering industries have rapidly changed since the Covid-19 pandemic and will continue to. When I went to Cosmetology School almost 16 years ago there was no YouTube, Instagram, Behind the Chair virtual education, or any online education that I am aware of. As a professional stylist who has personally invested thousands of dollars into my continuing education as well as using these revolutionary online learning platforms. I strongly believe that if a program was made available to students to learn the core concepts and safety measures of hair cutting, coloring, and styling, and valuable applicable business skills-it is 100% possible to build and perfect your practical skills in the salon while utilizing all the above-mentioned online education platforms.
- Regarding Ohio accepting licensees in good standing from other states with no further testing required: this is in my opinion PAST DUE. I believe this practice is burdensome to say the least. Not allowing license reciprocity has held back professionals aspiring to pursue their dreams, and even worse those licensees who are moving themselves and their families to Ohio to escape abusive or desperate situations who could come to our state and start earning an income IMMEDIATELY.
- To address pre-graduate testing and allowing for up to 50% virtual learning I think the Covid-19 shutdowns have proved this to be possible. I believe it

is past time to implement this option. How many people do you know who are college educated and were able to pursue their education online? If other professionals can complete a large portion of their education online, it is unjust to not allow cosmetology and barbering students to do the same by using the excuse this is a “hands on industry.” Every single person learns differently, and I know from my personal experience online learning has become one of my favorite options because of the flexibility and affordability, sometimes even being free! Regarding CEU hours being available to licensed stylists and barbers online: I personally **100%** support this. During the Covid-19 shutdown of salons, I attained more CEU’s than I ever have in a 3-month period and probably a year. I took above the required amount of sanitation and disinfection courses, hair coloring courses, a course on selecting and utilizing different types of shears, I learned the silk press technique of smoothing natural hair and have built on my knowledge of caring for black and textured hair by identifying common issues and what products and techniques to use depending on the desired result. I also took a 2-hour online course on improving your public speaking skills and how to break into becoming an educator using various social media platforms.

I’d like to briefly share my background and personal journey through this industry. I feel it is important to know where I started and how I got to where I am because, like Ladosha Wright said in her opponent testimony, nobody working and toiling in this industry was here to support SB 133 at the first hearing. I feel it would be a disservice to those that have walked a similar path as I have and want nothing more than OPTIONS so they may pursue their dreams of being a part of our amazing industry.

Both of my parents grew up in generational poverty and were the first in their families to attend and graduate college. Both have their master’s degrees, my mother in education, and my father in business. Unfortunately, my parents divorced when I was 5 years old so 3 of my 4 siblings and I grew up in a single mother household. My mom did the best she could with what little she had to care for her children. She put herself through college to pursue her passion of becoming a teacher. We lived in poverty surrounded by crime and the heartbreaking effects of addiction in public housing in Chillicothe, Ohio (Ross county). During that time, my mom relied on food stamps and WIC to feed her 4

children and our church would provide us with meals and presents on holidays. While I still deal with the effects of my formative years being sometimes chaotic and unstable today, these experiences have helped me to be empathetic and understanding that we all come from different walks of life and there isn't just one path to success and happiness. We need options to be successful. If Senate Bill 133 is passed it will give us just that, OPTIONS.

Shortly after receiving my license, I got a job as an apprentice in a family-owned salon in the Bexley neighborhood of Columbus. I apprenticed here for almost one year and was close to completing my apprenticeship and graduating to the salon floor when I found out I was pregnant with my now 14-year-old son. I knew I couldn't support a family on my income while living in Columbus, so I decided to move to a more affordable area where a friend of mine from cosmetology school had gotten a job and encouraged me to join her. Even though I had completed almost a year of additional training in a salon already, my new salon required me to go through their apprenticeship program as well for one year to in their words, "teach me how to really do hair in a salon."

As an apprentice in a salon my job consisted of shadowing the senior stylists throughout their workday and assist them in any way I could. We worked on building my consultation skills, shampooing (because I still soaked peoples clothing from time to time), mixing, formulating, and applying hair color, selling retail, formal styling, and blow-drying skills. I was also required to do the typical shop duties in a salon like doing laundry, dishes, sweeping hair, and making sure clients were comfortable and taken care of. Fridays we had a men's cutting class. And 1-2 days a week our salon manager and senior stylist taught additional classes sometimes in her own home. Our salon also brought in amazing educators several times a year. I tell you this because even though I had a good experience at my school and continued to learn from seasoned hairstylists on the job, I strongly believe if Senate Bill 133 had been passed in 2005, I would have had the opportunity to bypass a portion of my unpaid clinic hours where I was not even allowed to accept tips from my customers. I could have been working in a salon sooner and gaining valuable experience so that I could have support myself and my son better.

Since getting licensed in 2005 I have placed a high priority on advancing my education. I have studied at the Vidal Sassoon Advanced Academy in Toronto

which was a lifetime dream of mine. I've learned several specialized techniques such as hair extensions, wedding hair styling and makeup. I have taken classes by barbers, texture experts, hair colorists, school, and salon owners. I have attended classes at trade shows in Columbus, Chicago, and New York. I've taken one on one classes with top educators in our field, and more recently I have taken countless online courses.

I am submitting my written testimony to you, the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee because while my school gave me a foundation to build on it was small businesses that continue to invest in me their time, experience and resources. The stylists I trained under invested in me and asked for nothing in return other than I show up with an open mind and ready to learn. These small business owners and veteran stylists devoted their free time to teach myself and so many other young stylists who I am still friends with today, from their own personal experiences, mistakes, failures, and successes. To me that is invaluable. It is also important to tell you these young stylists that I "grew up with" in the beauty industry attended public and private schools. They have moved on to corporate positions with industry leaders, they are salon owners, booth renters, innovators, teachers, and my friends.

To say I have a deep passion and love for this industry is an understatement. This industry raised me. I entered it when I was 18 and I'm now 35. My son grew up in the salon with me. Folding towels, sweeping hair, and charming our customers. I have been through divorce, abuse, struggled as a single mother, battled chronic illness, and survived a near fatal car accident with my son. When I was separated by miles from my own family, my family was my salon, my coworkers, and my clients.

I want to tell you a compelling story I read in one of my online support groups for cosmetologists about a young woman in Texas. She began cosmetology school 13 years ago. While attending cosmetology school she became pregnant 3 times. She would take time off to care for her children but after her third she had no choice but to drop out. She tried for years to go back and finish her education, but no cosmetology school would accept her because she was only in need of around 200 hours to complete her required 1500-hour program (which is a common issue I have been made aware of that distance learning could solve). In 2020 Texas passed a bill that reduced cosmetology hours from 1500 to 1000. This young

mother is finally able to pursue her lifelong dream of being a hairstylist. Members of this group are supplying her with current study materials and pointing her in the direction of online platforms that will help her prepare to take her state board exam. This is one of many stories that I have heard that further solidified my stance on the importance of meaningful Cosmetology reform and that by offering options we will open doors for more women like her.

I thought this story was important to share so that we can ask ourselves: Who is benefiting from this bill NOT passing? It isn't the woman who's story I shared above. Is it the poor and underserved? The mothers? The single parents desperate for a career to support themselves and their children? The young person who has grown up in their family's salon or barbershop and has already received years of education by way of observing and listening to their elders?

When I hear people say this bill will create workers, not owners, and only benefit corporate and chain salons it's not just personal, I believe it is simply not true. It is important to know that a large portion of those who have been most vocal in their opposition to Senate Bill 133 have a large financial interest in keeping things at the status quo to preserve their own interests and are using the words denigrate and devalue to place fear and anger in the minds of hairstylists just like myself who have worked their way from the ground up and are proud to hold a professional license in this industry. I feel strongly that these arguments undermine and underestimate the power of an individual who is a passionate, curious, and lifetime learner.

Furthermore, using the argument that providing the OPTION of reducing hours in a cosmetology or barbering program to allow for on the job PAID training will devalue or denigrate our industry in my opinion feel like an attack on the small businesses like the ones I have had the honor of working for. I feel that those who have stood up in front of this committee claiming this bill will hurt small business and line the pockets of large chain salons are themselves doubting the power and importance of small businesses. In fact, this argument in my opinion, devalues and denigrates not only the small businesses it devalues the time, money, and efforts that industry professionals like myself have and will continue to invest in.

I would like to one last time state that as a woman, a cosmetologist and an independent contractor currently working for a small business, I strongly support

Senate Bill 133 and believe it is a step towards breaking down barriers for our most vulnerable future professionals. Like Chris Ferruso of the NFIB said perfectly in his proponent testimony on May 5<sup>th</sup> “this is a floor, not a ceiling.” There are changes that are long overdue in our industry and Senate Bill 133 will allow us to move in the direction of these positive and inclusive changes.

Again, Chairman Rulli and members of the Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee:

Thank you for taking your time to hear both opponents and proponents give their testimonies. Thank you especially for reading my personal proponent testimony. I will be happy to answer any follow-up questions via email or phone conversation.

Kindly,

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