

## Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 133 Anthony Fragomeni

Chairman Rulli, Vice Chair Lang, Ranking Member Sykes.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit to the Senate Small Business & Economic Opportunity Committee the following in support of SB 133 not as the first step in deregulation or diminishing the education or the value of the Profession, but as the first and most important step in badly needed reform.

I spent the last 30 years of my Career in the Beauty School Industry in numerous capacities. I started out as an Admissions person, became a Director, eventually an Owner, sold the School to a Nationally known group and worked in an Executive Management capacity for 11 years and I am now outside of the Traditional Beauty School Industry.

During my 30 years I have served on a number of Industry Related Boards and Associations. I am the past President of the New York State Beauty Schools Association, (NYSBSA) and The American Association of Beauty Schools, (AACS) I was Chairman of The Accreditation Committee, Government Affairs Team and Executive Committees. I was a Non-Federal Negotiator during Negotiated Rulemaking with the Department of Education as well as serving in other capacities during multiple Negotiating Sessions. I am a current member of The Future of the Beauty Industry Coalition (FBIC) but most importantly throughout my career I have been an Advocate for people that choose Trade and Vocational Education. Specifically The Beauty Industry! I am not currently representing any group or Company. I have no axe to grind and little if any skin in the game other than I am concerned about our Industry.

The Beauty Industry has been in need of reform for quite some time. When

the FBIC was formed, its mission was to bring together the different factions of the Industry to craft sensible Reform. The Industry has changed, the needs of Salons has changed, technology has changed, the way our students learn has changed and yet amidst all of this change “The Collective Industry” has been very resistant to change.

External forces (not the Chain Salons) led by groups like the Institute for Justice, The Buckeye Institute and other Libertarian type groups, have led De-Regulation efforts and they will continue to do so. They are well organized and very well funded and have a clear mission. Initially FBIC included Groups like the Professional Beauty Salon Association, (PBA) The American Association of Cosmetology Schools,(AACCS) The National Interstate Council of State Boards,(NIC) The International Chain Salon Association,(ICSA) along with Publishers and several others. The Mission was simple, formulate sensible reform in the Industry to preserve the Professional status while maintaining educational standards that allowed people to attain skills for entry level employment in the Industry.

A study was commissioned to determine the range of outcomes of students attending schools in States from programs of various length. Data points included, completion rates, pass/fail rates on exams, placement, earning, length in the Industry, student debt and several others were examined. Findings were that there was no significant difference indicated based on the lengths of the programs other than student debt. At this time several of the groups opted out of endorsing the study because their constituents refuted the validity but moreover their *Members* were opposed to the findings. (In favor of the study being conducted but not in favor or supportive of the findings.) There is more to this but I want to lead with this because much of the opposition to SB133 is driven by rhetoric, personal opinion, personal protection and anecdote. So when people say we want to work together or I’ve extended an olive branch it rings hollow to me because of history.

I am very uncomfortable and surprised that there are those that seem to drive their opposition based on Title IV eligibility. Mr. Gross was the only person that addressed this. I agree wholeheartedly that this conversation should start and end with what is best for the students, not how much aid they are eligible for. We need to talk about more efficient ways to prepare our students for *entry* into the Industry. When we speak of advanced learning, or expertise after receiving basic education, I think it's a slap in the face of the many that have spent years honing their craft and that also goes along with being a business owner. You need to learn the Industry in order to become a business owner and no length or content of *BASIC* Education is going to give you that. Salons have been continuing the education of NOVICE Hairdressers since licensing has existed and that is where the rubber meets the road. Continued, continual and continuing education will separate the average from the good and the good from the great, not *BASIC* Education. Many of if not most of the standards that are set by State Boards and Accreditation are *minimum* standards, that is part of the reason why you're given the latitude to provide 50% more than the minimum. Yes there are bureaucratic hoops to jump through but they are designed as safeguards to insure that extra time is justified. Currently there are schools that run above State Minimum Requirements in other States so it is being done. Setting the minimum to 1,000 as proposed by SB 133, allows for flexibility and gives schools and students a choice. If you want to continue to offer 1,500 hours go through the process and if it provides a better preparation the students will decide that.

As stated in my opening, this is the first important step for reform. Regardless of the outcome here we need to move onto curriculum content, scope of practice, testing, reciprocity, continuing education, pre-graduate testing and other innovations including the effective use of on-line learning. Another Session of inactivity or kicking the can delays these other changes

that are being undertaken in other States. There was mention of the DOD Compaq and their innovations with reciprocity. They have done some great work and are not focusing on the amount of “hours” to obtain the credential rather the scope of practice. Soon how long it took to get the credential will not be a standard that is considered. Some States are already ahead of that curve and recognize and accept a current license in good standing from another State. Much like how States accept out of State Drivers Licenses, Nursing Licenses, CDL Licenses and others.

In closing, Change is seldom met without resistance. Change is seldom popular. The opponents of change are often driven by fear, protectionism, lack of understanding and desire for the Status Quo. The proponents are often driven by the search for a better way, dreams, innovation, survival, new horizons. Neither are perfect and neither are 100% correct. But change is inevitable. The question often becomes do you want to accept and be a part of change or do you want to be changed and struggle to accept the inevitably of what change brings?

I come to you not asking you to solve our problems, I come to you asking that you empower us to solve our problems by passing the enabling Legislation of SB133 as the first, most important step.

Let's together begin the Reform and Change that is necessary. Support the passage of SB 133.

Respectfully,

Anthony Fragomeni

I am available for questions and clarifications and I may be reached at: [afragomeni07@gmail.com](mailto:afragomeni07@gmail.com)

570-789-3820