**Sponsor Testimony SB129**

**Cosmetology Reform**

**Senator Charleta B. Tavares**

Chairman Coley and Ranking Member Schiavoni, Senator Jordan and I appreciate having the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 129. This bill will continue the good work started with SB 213 in the 131st General Assembly, by seeking to remove unnecessary barriers to the cosmetology industry.

Specifically, SB 129 will reduce the minimum number of hours for a cosmetology license to 1,000 hours; a hair designer license from 1,200 to 600 hours; an esthetician license from 600 to 300 hours; and a manicurist license from 200 to 100 hours. These changes are not meant to deregulate cosmetology in Ohio; rather it implements common sense reforms that will help make Ohio a nationwide leader in spurring jobs and growth in the cosmetology industry.

Contrary to what some may believe, an independent study from the American Institute of Research found that longer hours in licensure do not lead to higher earnings. Longer hours do not lead to higher passing rates on exams or higher course completion rates. However, they do lead to additional costs to students and increased student debt, because of the low level of pay in entry level cosmetology positions. The Bureau of Labor Statics reported the annual mean wage in 2016 for hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists in Ohio was $19,500- $25,980. Graduates are often unable to make payments on the loans they take out to pay for their education. This may create a barrier-to-entry as they may choose not to enter the profession because they do not believe they will see a return on their investment.

The bill also adds a cosmetology apprentice program designed to give

hands on experience to interested young people who want to make a career in cosmetology. The apprenticeship is modeled after existing programs that are currently having great success in Alabama, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and California. Some of the provisions for the apprentice license include:

* An age requirement of at least 16 years of age and have an equivalent of an Ohio 10th grade education;
* Pass an apprentice examination developed by the Cosmetology & Barber board and pay a $25 fee;
* Receive compensation that is at least minimum wage;
* Work under a trainer who holds a valid practicing or instructing license and has at least 5 years of experience;
* Complete a twelve-month training program with the trainer for a minimum of one thousand eight hundred hours of on-the-job training, and two hundred hours of related instruction; and
* At the conclusion of the program, an apprentice may take the examination required under section 4713.24 of the Revised Code. If the apprentice successfully passes the examination, the board shall grant the apprentice the appropriate practicing license.

The bill will also create a brand new special event permit that allows an individual on a limited and temporary basis, to practice outside of a salon or school. The special event permit enables on-site work at weddings and other special events. In the interest of accountability, special events can be inspected by the board without notice.

In addition to the special event permit, SB 129 will also allow and encourage distance education for students who may not have the time, availability, or financial stability to attend a traditional brick and mortar school. It also replaces the non-transferable advanced license with the instructor license which is in line with most other states.

Lastly, it directs the board to allow for a pre-graduate exam in addition to the post graduate exam that currently exists. This pre-graduate exam will allow for immediate licensure after they complete all required hours and will also allow those who do not pass the exam to have remedial training.

In closing, Senate Bill 129 is common sense reform that will push the cosmetology industry forward by removing harmful barriers to entry. Our focus should be on student and school success and well-being, not increasing costs, debt, and worry for newly licensed cosmetologists trying to get a start on their careers. Thank you for your consideration and I urge your support for the bill. One other update before we take your questions, my colleague and I would like to note that due to the recent passage the FY 18-19 Operating Budget, SB 129 will be updated to reflect the technical changes to the composition of the Cosmetology Board. We thank you again and welcome any questions at this time.