**Proponent Testimony on SB 129**

**By \_\_\_\_\_\_Stefan Eckert, President, Eckert, Inc. (Great Clips Franchise)**

**Before the Senate Government Oversight & Reform Committee**

**On Tuesday, December 12, 2017**

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Schiavoni and distinguished members of the Senate Government Accountability & Reform Committee.  My name is Stefan Eckert and I am one of the owners and President of Eckert, Inc. with 15 Great Clips salons located in the greater Cincinnati and Dayton areas. My salons are located from downtown Cincinnati on the south to Sidney, Oh on the north and Hamilton, OH on the west to Wilmington, OH on the east/northeast.  I want to express my support for the cosmetology reforms contained in SB 129.

* I started Eckert, Inc. in 1997 and have worked tirelessly over the past 20 plus years to make it successful. I have gotten my three grown children involved and made them co-owners about two years ago. I looked at various possible franchises 22 years ago and am happy I decided on Great Clips. At the same time, there have been various controls/restrictions in the business that makes it difficult for my employees and the company to be successful.
* Many, many of my 140 employees have experienced problems with the 1,500 cosmetology hours that are required. Reducing it to 1,000 would make sense for everyone. The hair design hours are also needlessly excessive and a major burden for prospective cosmetologists. Reducing it to 800 just makes a great deal of logical sense for the industry.
* At Great Clips, we put a major emphasis on regular training and testing/monitoring our employees throughout the year to be certain they are up to standards. Local training centers in both Cincinnati and Dayton help support this ongoing effort.
* SB 129 will : help increase the number of licensed beauty professionals in Ohio; License reciprocity/endorsement for beauty professionals entering Ohio (i.e. no waiting, no additional training hours, no additional test for licensure to start working) will make things easier. Plus, creation of an apprenticeship program in case public and private schools don’t produce enough graduates to feed the workforce pipeline will be extremely beneficial.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on SB 129 to the committee.  I understand this hearing is the last opportunity for SB 129 to be discussed before the holidays.  I urge your favorable action on the bill in early 2018.

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