



THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

Ohio's Burdensome Cosmetology Requirements Need to be Trimmed

Interested Party Testimony
Ohio Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee
Senate Bill 133

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As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Chairman Rulli, Vice Chair Lang, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify regarding Senate Bill 133.

My name is Greg R. Lawson. I am a research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute**, an independent research and educational institution—a think tank—whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

Senate Bill 133 helps address Ohio’s over-licensing problem and will continue the important legislative effort already underway to lower barriers to entry to Ohio’s salon industry by lowering the required hours of education required to obtain a cosmetology license from 1,500 to 1,000 hours. This will bring Ohio into line with a growing trend around the nation.

Ohio cosmetologists must complete 1,500 hours of training under Ohio law—that’s 250 hours more training than their peers in Pennsylvania and 500 more hours than hairdressers in New York, Texas, and Vermont. Such an onerous training requirement proves laughable when compared to the 150 hours of training required to be a state certified Emergency Medical Technician. With Ohio currently requiring cosmetologists to have *10 times* the training of basic EMTs, the case for licensing reform doesn’t get much clearer.

Of course, Ohio’s over-licensing problem extends well beyond the local hair salon. The Buckeye Institute’s report ***Forbidden to Succeed: How Licensure Laws Hold Ohioans Back*** revealed that Ohio’s occupational licensing burdens are well above average. Of Ohio’s 31 moderate-income occupations requiring licensure, 15 require hundreds or thousands of hours of training. Remarkably, nearly every Ohio license that requires training can be earned in less time in another state. The state certainly needs to require appropriate training and licensing for jobs with health and safety concerns, such as physicians and pilots, and no one disputes this. But such concern fades dramatically when applied, for example, to auctioneers, travel guides, and hairdressers.

Onerous licensing burdens—essentially requiring workers to ask the government for a permission slip to earn a living—make Ohio less competitive, less prosperous, and less attractive to entrepreneurs and their employees. Extensive licensing requirements only make finding a job more difficult. Every unnecessary license is a red-taped hurdle that must be cleared. Every hour of unnecessary, unpaid training needed to satisfy bureaucratic requirements is an hour not spent earning tips, impressing a boss, serving a customer, or climbing a corporate ladder. Those are hours of productivity, hours of opportunity that young, low-income workers sorely need, but that the state continues to take away.

Even more concerning are the daunting employment prospects faced by many in Ohio’s minority communities. Nationally, the unemployment rate among African Americans has improved in recent years but remains stubbornly **higher** than among other demographics as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Cosmetology and the salon industry are projected to grow, creating new opportunities for work and careers in the profession. Reforming Ohio’s cosmetology licensing regime will make it easier for African Americans to enter this up-and-coming profession and alleviate unemployment in minority communities.

Senate Bill 133 advances the state's anti-red-tape reform effort and will remove at least some of the occupational licensing obstacles faced by Ohio's working men and women. Of course, much more than Senate Bill 133 is needed and I look forward to exploring additional solutions with you and continuing our conversation on this important issue.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions that the Committee might have.



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