

Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Mario Blount Jr. I am currently a Sophomore at Eastmoor Academy High School within the Columbus City Schools District. I am strongly in support of HB158.

I feel that the HB158 will open up more opportunities for students such as myself to be in a barber program to advance our careers. I am currently 15 years old aspiring to be a licensed barber. Many students my age do not know what they want their career path to be, but I do. I would like to attend a high school barber program next year, perfect my skills and apply those hours towards being a licensed barber.

I have already expressed my passion for being a licensed barber with my community, by giving free haircuts to children in need going back to school. I also take every opportunity to gain knowledge from current licensed barbers but I feel that is not enough. This change in the HB158 will not only help me to pursue my dreams, but other fellow classmates as well. When it came time to do career center visits for all the sophomores, I honestly picked any program. This was because the program I wanted to go to and am passionate about the barber program is not available. I was very devastated to learn that after all this time there still is not a barber program. How is it helping me by choosing any program to fulfil that void?

I could be anywhere right now, but I am here asking you to consider this life changing opportunity. Today's licensed barbers are so influential on today's youth. We sit in the barber chair every one to two weeks and catch up with our barbers, learn from them and get new tips. Barbers are an important part of my life and that is another reason why I inspire to be a licensed barber.

I ask that you take my testimony into consideration and support this student life changing bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.