

Good morning Mr. Chairman and committee members,

My name is Rebecca Wood and I am here on behalf of the ND State Board of Cosmetology. I am also a licensed cosmetologist of 20 years a salon owner of 14 years.

I am here today to stand in opposition of SB 2236. As a Board we have reviewed the bill as it is written and we find it to be incomplete. We have done extensive research on what makes a successful apprenticeship program, and we feel this misses many of the important details. First, this bill states that the requirements are simply to be a board approved cosmetologist, who must comply with rules adopted by the board. However, there are no parameters for approval given. Second, it states that the cosmetologist must have been licensed for at least 8 years, must also be a licensed instructor, AND must be actively working as a cosmetologist for a minimum of 25 hours per week. The Board is concerned that this does the exact opposite that an apprenticeship program aims to do, and that is, add in extra layers of regulation. There are currently 6,926 licensed cosmetologists in ND, and of those, only 85 are licensed instructors, with only 25 currently active. These requirements are so limiting that nearly no one will qualify to oversee an apprentice.

Next, we look at student requirements. A student will receive 600 hours of cosmetology education and complete the "standards of the school of cosmetology." Again, as a Board we are concerned by the lack of parameters within this requirement. 600 hours is just somewhere in the middle of their training with no clear guide of what requirements must be completed. The last statement is that "the apprentice may assist in any of the practices of cosmetology under the supervision of the cosmetologist." We are concerned that this opens up a bit of a dangerous territory. This would mean that nearly 20% of their required hours would essentially be undefined. We feel this is a large chunk of their education to let go without having a concrete definition of what would need to be completed during those hours, as well as requirements for proof of completion.

As stated previously we have done extensive research on cosmetology apprenticeship programs and we do find that there is a possibility of creating a well-structured program in the future. The reason we continue to pass on the implementation of such programs is that we are finding that many of the states who have currently adopted apprenticeship programs are seeing very very low graduation numbers. We must be able to find a way to introduce apprenticeships that do not set these students up for failure. The issue we continue to run into is that to create a successful program, we often times find that we are creating more regulation than simply attending a traditional cosmetology school. One example is simply the length of time to licensure. Many states allow for a traditional cosmetology student to graduate in around 10 months, while apprenticeship programs often take nearly double that. After speaking with 2 other states that are offering these programs, I am confident that ND can offer this as an option in the future, but with careful and thoughtful planning.

I will close by saying thank you for your time and consideration as our industry is seeing huge change happening. We believe change is good, we just want to make sure we continue to fulfill our mission as a board, and that is "to ensure the health and safety of North Dakota consumers by promoting ethical standards and by enforcing the laws of the beauty industry."

I am more than happy to stand for questions.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Wood