

TO: House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee

FROM: Lance Ekern, President of the North Dakota Barber Board of Examiners

DATE: 1/20/2025

RE: Testimony in support of House Bill 1317

To the Committee,

My name is Lance Ekern. I am the president of the North Dakota Barber Board of Examiners as well as being a Master Barber since 2006. I regret that I am unable to attend in person but wanted to make it known I am in support of HB 1317 with the proposed amendments relating to the board of examiners, barber licensing, continuing education, and fees; and providing a penalty.

The North Dakota Barber Board of Examiners currently has three members: president, vice-president, and secretary/treasurer. The board would like to appoint two members who can assist with the duties that are necessary to keep the board operational. Currently the state has 88 barber shops with the three members tasked with doing shop inspections to ensure standards are met to protect the general public. All the members of the Barber Board of Examiners are also full-time barbers. This is nearly an impossible task with the number of shops as well as the distance to travel. This will help alleviate the burden and ensure more timely interventions to ensure the board fulfills their duty to the public to provide the highest standard of professional services in a safe and cleanly manner.

The Board of Examiners meets quarterly to test graduates of an accredited barber college for their licensing. A temporary license would be available for those who have met the requirements to test for their license to work prior to taking their exam if under the direct supervision of a licensed master barber. A restricted license would include those who failed to pass one of the required parts of their licensing exam and work under a master barber until they can retest. Adding these licenses allows new graduates to get into the workforce sooner and continue to master their skills, while being monitored by a licensed professional to ensure quality and safety. The guidelines found in section 7 for those who qualify are listed to provide an extra safeguard for continuity of quality measures.

I am also in favor of adding a retired barber license for those barbers who meet the criteria outlined in section 9. This would allow barbers who have retired to work several days a month at a discounted rate.

Lastly, the board would like to add the ability to impose fines for those who do not complete their continuing education. This would allow them to complete the necessary education they need without revoking their license, which is the current policy. This allows for more flexibility and gives the barber time to return to compliance. Another fee outlined in this bill would be to add licensing fees for the proposed restricted, temporary, and retired licenses. It is also recommended to increase the instructor fee from \$25 to \$250. As the education of future barbers is of the utmost importance to uphold the strong tradition and skills of this profession, I feel the fees should be reflective upon that and increased accordingly to the above amendment.

As the president of the North Dakota Board of Examiners, it is the recommendation of the board and I to support this bill in full as written with the amendments and additions as indicated. This allows

the board to operate at a higher level and hold barbers and future barbers to higher standards of quality and will not place any monetary burden on taxpayers.

I would like to thank the committee for allowing me to testify in support of this bill that will continue to allow barbers to serve the public to the highest standards for years to come.

Sincerely,

Lance Ekern

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