

Testimony in Support of HB1426

Debbie Carlson, Faces Etc. of MN

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Dear Chairman Weisz and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am here today to give my testimony and ask for your support in passing House Bill 1426

My name is Debbie Carlson. I am the founder of Faces Etc. of MN, a licensed post-secondary multimedia makeup school in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I have spent my 40-year career as both an on-site freelance media makeup artist and a licensed beauty professional. I have held all five beauty-related licenses in Minnesota, including cosmetologist, manager, salon owner, school manager and instructor.

I opened Faces Etc in 2007 in response to cosmetology students asking how to have a makeup career. Students come to our school to have their own businesses and receive a diploma in multimedia makeup. This is a real career path for makeup artists. My school also offers a board-approved safety and sanitation course in Minnesota for both licensed cosmetologists and estheticians and unlicensed makeup artists.

Unfortunately, cosmetology schools offer very little training that is relevant to the hairstyling and makeup work we do as freelance hair and makeup artists. Makeup has never been the focus of cosmetology schools. The focus has always been haircuts, color, skincare and nails. The scant makeup curriculum, along with the reality that many instructors are uncomfortable teaching makeup, is generally the reason many salons do not offer makeup as a service.

I have had students attend Faces Etc of MN from all across the country and world. Some of my students come to my school dissatisfied after completing cosmetology school. We have trained hundreds of makeup artists and many from North Dakota. Most of our alumni are unlicensed beauty professionals.

In my early years in the industry, brides and clients looking for special event hair and makeup brought their wedding parties to the salon. But in the last twenty years, a new "consumer-driven" trend emerged: clients now want artists to come to them for special events. The client created the demand and entrepreneurial and dedicated artists like my alumni have filled that need.

Often times beauty boards say that licensing freelance hair and makeup artists is about sanitation. The artists I have worked with over my decades in the industry are more conscious of their sanitation and safety protocols than most other industries I've seen, including people working in salons. This bill also requires sanitation training, which further protects sanitation. This is the approach Minnesota has taken and hundreds of artists are safely working in the state without a license.

In today's world, reputation is a powerful force. Any entrepreneur knows that nothing will shut down their business faster than a 1-star review.

We all know that just because a person “holds a license” doesn’t mean that sanitation protocols are being followed. There are horror stories in any industry, but customers themselves are the best judge of safety and sanitation and will hold the artist accountable.

Freelance hair and makeup artists are self-employed. They bring a huge contribution to any state in paying taxes. They generate careers for young entrepreneurs, minorities, and additional income opportunities for young families. And if they are exempt from licensing, they are able to do this without having to go into debt to get started.

Thank you for allowing me to share. I ask that you please support House Bill 1426 to exempt freelance makeup and hairstyling from needless licensing.