

The Maine Heritage Policy Center Testimony to Support LD 1768

"An Act To Amend the Barbering and Cosmetology Licensing Laws"

Senator Herbig, Representative Daughtry and distinguished members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Adam Crepeau and I serve as a policy analyst at The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of LD 1768.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center supports this legislation because it would make it slightly easier for individuals to become barbers and cosmetologists in the state of Maine. However, since this legislation does not completely eliminate licensing requirements for barbers and cosmetologists from state statute, we believe it does not go far enough to attract individuals to those professions.

The stated purpose of the Barbering and Cosmetology License is “to protect the public through the regulation of the practice of barbering and cosmetology in the State of Maine.”¹ The “purpose” of this licensure assumes consumers cannot protect themselves against subpar barbers and cosmetologists. However, this statement is outdated and is a false assumption - if consumers do not like their haircuts, they do not have to continue receiving services from their barber or cosmetologist. With the advent of the internet, it is easier now than ever to find and offer reviews of services. Online reviews on sites such as Google and Yelp help prospective consumers decide where they would like to get their next haircut. This is a truly free-market solution that does not require government intervention to protect consumers.

While we commend the sponsor for introducing a bill that would allow for greater license reciprocity, reduce the age for students to enroll in classes, exempt some activities from licensure and reduce the number of hours required for licensure, it is imperative to note that licensure of these professions does not contribute to public safety. In fact, there are other professions that are specifically geared toward public safety but have less stringent requirements. According to the *Let Us Work* report released by The Maine Heritage Policy Center in 2018, barbers and cosmetologists are required to train for around 167 days to obtain a license whereas emergency medical technicians are only required to train for 26 days, despite the risks involved in the latter profession.²

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing/professions/barbers/purpose.html>

² <https://mainepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/LetUsWorkFinal.pdf>

The Maine Heritage Policy Center supports LD 1768 but recommends the committee put forth an amendment to repeal the licenses for barbers and cosmetologists altogether, or further reduce the burden to obtaining licensure in these professions.

With that, I urge the committee to vote, "Ought to Pass" on LD 1768 with the proposed changes outlined in this testimony. Thank you.