

March 23.2022

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 448 State Board of Cosmetologists – Licensees – Supervision of Apprentices

Dear Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

My name is Shirley Leach. I am a 30+year licensed cosmetologist, former executive director for the State Board of Barbers and Cosmetologists, business owner and career advocate for industry students and licensees.

I support House Bill 448. In addition to the well documented benefits of sponsored apprenticeships, increasing from one to two, the maximum number of apprentices that qualified cosmetology professionals may directly train and supervise, will generate valuable opportunity for small business owners to create a cost-effective operating/ training model. The maximum increase may also foster an increase in the number of qualified trainers as well as the number of individuals seeking licensure by way of apprenticeship.

I started my industry career as cosmetology apprentice in a small Baltimore City salon. The owner wanted to both build her business and support young stylists through apprenticeship. Of the three licensed professionals working at the shop two were qualified sponsors. I was assigned to the available sponsor, however after three months my trainer decided to move in a different direction and left the shop. The remaining trainer was encumbered to another student. Because of the Maryland 1:1 teacher/trainer maximum law, I could no longer work as an apprentice at that shop. I tried to find other sponsors, another shop, but to no avail.

The only other road to licensure was to enroll in a private career school. I was a young wife and mother we could not afford the tuition, therefore, my dream to become a cosmetologist was deferred. It took another five years before I could afford cosmetology school.

My story is not unique within the industry. Qualified professionals want to build their brand through apprenticeship but face undo barriers because of the current 1:1 law. Please vote yes on HB448.

Sincerely,

Shirley Leach
BABC Learning Org