

## Testimony in Support of HB1232

Maryland Senate

Hello,

My name is Charity Flaskamp, and I have been a licensed, practicing cosmetologist in the state of Maryland for the past 22 years. With my broad license, hundreds of hours of continuing education, and years of hands-on experience working in both corporate and private salons and spas, I've learned so much and become a huge advocate for normalizing technical schools. Trades like cosmetology, massage therapy, HVAC, and auto mechanics are not just necessary—they're valuable. And as we all know, the traditional school or university setting isn't the right fit for a lot of kids. That doesn't mean they can't still be successful.

I'm here today, for the second year, in support of HB1232, which would create a limited lash technician license in Maryland. One of the reasons I love living here is because I truly believe we take pride in doing things the right way. But somehow, for over a decade, lash extension services have gone completely unregulated in our state. I've been calling and emailing the state board since 2017 about this issue because Maryland is now one of only three states left with no licensing requirements for lash services. Every state around us—Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, and Washington, D.C.—has strict licensing regulations. Because of that, we've become a free-for-all for people looking to skirt the rules.

Right now, anyone and everyone can call themselves a "lash tech" here, with no formal education, no safety or sanitation training, and no standards of practice. That's led to a "Wild West" situation, where untrained individuals are offering these services, sometimes opening full-fledged businesses, with no oversight whatsoever. People are crossing state lines just to take advantage of Maryland's lack of regulation. And let me be clear—lash extensions aren't just a beauty service. There's a science to this. We, as cosmetologists, are the hair, skin, and nail scientists—and we know firsthand the risks of eye infections, allergic reactions, and even permanent lash loss when this service isn't performed correctly.

That's why creating a limited lash technician license is essential. This bill would allow individuals who want to specialize in lash extensions to complete a 100-hour state-accredited training program, covering safety, sanitation, proper application techniques, and how to prevent injuries and complications. They would then take an exam to prove competency, affirm their commitment to state board standards, and take an oath to practice ethically and safely.

And it doesn't stop there. If a licensed lash tech wants to open a brick-and-mortar salon, they would be required to get a salon license, just like any other beauty business. This means they'd have to prove they're in good standing with the state, obtain a business and trader's license, and meet proper zoning requirements. Once that's done, the State Board of Cosmetology would conduct an inspection to make sure everything is up to health and safety standards.

In conclusion, this license isn't about making things harder for lash techs—it's about protecting consumers, raising industry standards, and ensuring that anyone performing lash extensions in Maryland is properly trained. A short, 100-hour program is a reasonable step to ensure that these services are performed safely and professionally. And, frankly, it will stop people from coming here from other states just to work under zero regulations.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB1232 to bring Maryland up to standard with the rest of the country and ensure that lash extension services are safe, regulated, and held to the same level of professionalism as every other beauty service in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.