

March 2, 2023

Chair Erin Murphy
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue W.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Murphy and members of the Committee,

My name is Yenny Klatte, I came to the United States 17 years ago with my son from Colombia. In Colombia I studied the profession of hairstylist and for a few years I had the opportunity to work in my own salon. When I arrived in MN, I learned that in order to work in the state I would have to have a Cosmetology License and that the 10+ years of experience I already had were not valid enough to be able to work.

With a lot of effort and dedication I managed to get my operator's license and then my manager's license. When I got my manager's license, with a lot of sacrifice, I decided to buy a beauty salon here in Minneapolis, which I had for 2 years. Sadly, I had to sell it after two years, losing my savings, because I couldn't keep paying the high rent and due to the difficulty in finding licensed staff. The lack of licensed staff made it very difficult to generate profits. Additionally, the board of cosmetology inspectors showed up constantly. That made me sell my salon, because I couldn't deal with the stress of so many inspection visits and the increasing challenge of paying rent for the salon or my own home. Now I work renting a chair in a salon and I realize that the fines received by the owners are very high.

Dealing with the Board of Cosmetology brought on emotional stress, my health took a hit, and so did my finances. Again, that was the main reason that I had to sell my salon, costing me over \$25,000 in losses.

One of the biggest barriers to getting a cosmetology license is that in this state, we have to study and pass the nail and skin care exam if we want to cut hair. Also, every time we have to renew our license, we have to take refresher courses, and that is absolutely unnecessary since those of us who work in this area practice our skills daily. I think this should be optional as sometimes we don't have the resources to pay for such expensive courses. During the pandemic the Board of Cosmetology did not provide any relief, they did not think about how affected we were and even so for those of us who had to renew the license we had to pay for the renewal and also the refresher course. My question is, why does the Board of Cosmetology, instead of working hand in hand with us, makes things difficult for us?

I would like to have my beauty salon again, but I know that it is very difficult to find licensed cosmetologists. And the Board of Cosmetology seems to add barriers for people to get their license. I know people who have tried to get their license, but they can't because the exam is very complex. There are working mothers, like me, who would like the opportunity to work in a salon cutting hair in order to support their families, and it would be very helpful if there was a license to just cut and color hair.

We ask for alternatives that eliminate the barriers in order to have access to a license that allows us to cut hair and that more people can work with respect and dignity.

Thank you

Jenny Klatte