

January 17, 2023

The New Hampshire House of Representatives

Dear Committee,

My name is Jared Rhoads, and I am a senior affiliated scholar at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University and a health policy instructor at The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on New Hampshire HB 409-FN.

I support HB 409 and its effort to simplify the nonresident licensing requirements for barbering, cosmetology, and esthetics. For one, the wording of the law already stipulates that applicants must be "similarly licensed," making the status quo verbiage pertaining to "substantially equivalent to or higher than those of this state" essentially redundant.

Moreover, I support HB 409 because onerous occupational licensing requirements such as those in place in New Hampshire and other states for barbering, cosmetology, and esthetics are a slight against the right to earn a living. Contrary to how they are often pitched by proponents, occupational licensing restrictions do not primarily to ensure consumers of a certain level of quality or safety. Rather, they serve to restrict freedom of entry into business and commerce, and to keep consumer prices in the protected domain higher than they otherwise would be. As my Mercatus colleagues have cited, "A 2015 Obama administration report documents the growing costs of occupational licensing rules, which result in a hidden tax on consumers of between roughly 3 and 16 percent."

Here in New Hampshire, of all places, we ought to seek opportunities such as HB 409 to remove barriers to entry for entrepreneurs and allow competition, reputation, and other non-state mechanisms to regulate market conditions and participants naturally.

For those main reasons, I support HB 409 and urge you to do so as well.

That concludes my brief written testimony. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jared Rhoads

Lebanon, New Hampshire