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North Carolina Board of Barber Examiners
123 Barber Licensing Avenue Raleigh, NC 27601

Subject: Request to Allow Option of Apprenticeship in Barbershops

Dear Members of the North Carolina Board of Barber Examiners,

I am writing to bring to your attention a crucial matter concerning the future of barber education in our state. As a concerned barber, instructor and advocate for the barbering profession, I am urging the Board to consider amending the current regulations to allow for true apprenticeship programs within licensed barbershops.

The art of barbering is deeply rooted in tradition and skill, and the path to becoming a proficient barber should reflect this heritage. I firmly believe that by permitting students to learn directly from licensed instructors within barbershops, we can ensure that aspiring barbers receive the best possible education and practical training.

It is crucial to acknowledge the growing concern of unlicensed individuals operating as barbers after receiving training in community colleges. While these individuals may have undergone some form of instruction, many lack the practical training that is made available in a true apprenticeship program. Many Community Colleges do not see an inflow of clientele to provide the students with the degree of expertise that is needed to be successful. This has led to an influx of unqualified practitioners who call themselves barbers without meeting the necessary licensing requirements. By introducing a true apprenticeship option in barbershops, we can ensure that only those who have completed the required hours of instruction, served as apprentices under licensed instructors and have mastered the art of cutting can legitimately be recognized as skilled and certified barbers in North Carolina. This move will not only elevate the standards of the profession but also protect the public from potential harm caused by unqualified practitioners.

I propose the addition of a new apprenticeship option where no more than two students may be trained by a licensed instructor in an established barbershop. This apprenticeship program should still require a substantial commitment in terms of hours and time. To ensure the quality of education, students should complete a minimum of 1528 hours of instruction and serve as an apprentice for a duration of one to three years. This will guarantee that they receive comprehensive and hands-on training, honing their skills under the guidance of experienced professionals and increase their chances of passing the required testing.

It is essential to acknowledge that the demand for barbers in our communities remains high. However, there has been a noticeable decline in the number of proficient barbers graduating from traditional educational institutions. One of the root causes of this issue is the lack of adequate cutting practice and real-world experience within the confines of a classroom. By allowing students to work in actual barbershops with licensed instructors, they will gain the necessary practical knowledge and build confidence in their craft.

To address concerns of safety and adherence to regulations, I recommend that students under the apprenticeship program be required to obtain and display the necessary student permit at their workstations. This will ensure that they are appropriately identified and authorized to work under the guidance of a licensed instructor.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that adopting a true apprenticeship option within barbershops will revitalize the quality of barber education in North Carolina. It will bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, producing competent and skilled barbers who can serve our communities with pride. I kindly request that the Board carefully consider this proposal and work towards its implementation.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Your support in advancing the barbering profession will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the future of aspiring barbers in our state.

Sincerely,

Lee O Brooks