



Testimony to Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
SB 76 – Occupational Licensing
1 February 2017
James Franko, Vice President & Policy Director

Chairman LaTurner and Members of the Committee,

We appreciate this opportunity to present written testimony in support of SB 76 as a straight-forward way for more Kansans to have access to employment.

This bill simply prevents local governments from placing new licensing and fee requirements on certain professions. Thus, any existing licensing requirements are unchanged and existing health and safety requirements would be upheld.

Thankfully, a report from the Institute for Justice (IJ) entitled “License to Work” paints a very good overall picture of where Kansas stacks up when it comes to onerous occupational licensing requirements. “The relatively light burdens and few occupations licensed combine to make Kansas the 46th most broadly and onerously licensed state.”¹

At the same time, however, IJ’s report highlights some unseemly requirements, “For example, an emergency medical technician will spend 35 days training to earn a license in Kansas. Manicurists need more than twice that much training, 82 days, and barbers and cosmetologists need even more, 350 days.”

Some of these requirements are certainly state regulations that are beyond the scope of this bill which is why SB 76 is an important first step to ensure that new local regulations do not undermine the overall good environment enjoyed within Kansas.

In many cases, the professions most-heavily licensed are those that provide the simplest way for low-income Kansans to achieve economic stability. To the point raised in IJ’s report, why is it appropriate to have an emergency medical technician receive 1/10 of the training required for a barber or cosmetologist? This simply prevents someone who may enjoy cutting hair from actually opening a business of their own, providing for their family, and bringing a new opportunity to their community.

SB 76 is a good measure to ensure individuals across the state an opportunity to achieve economic success. We hope the committee will support the bill and look to remedy some of the remaining occupational licensing abuses within your purview.

¹ https://www.ij.org/images/pdf_folder/economic_liberty/occupational_licensing/licensetowork.pdf