



Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit WRITTEN-ONLY testimony in support of SB 10. This bill is but the first step that needs to be taken on the larger issue of occupational licensure. It provides a structure upon which the burdens of occupational licensing can be broken down, demands a justification for the licensing of different industries, and, more importantly, makes economic opportunity more achievable as Kansas families look to emerge from a global pandemic.

Our testimony can be summed up with one simple statement – onerous occupational licensure regimes too often put the next rung on the economic ladder out of reach for those most in-need of new economic opportunity.

Last year, KPI's litigation organization – Kansas Justice Institute – filed a lawsuit regarding occupational licensure against the Kansas Board of Cosmetology for non-monetary relief. Jigisha Modi and her husband, Jignesh Biscuitwala, operate an eyebrow threading salon in Olathe and want to hire Jignesh's mom, Jyostna. Unfortunately, Jyostna is unable obtain a license for something she had done for decades. You can [view a video about Jigisha and her family here](#).

Simply put, the American Dream is harder to achieve because of onerous licensing requirements.

The excerpt below is from a July 2015 report from President Obama's White House.ⁱ

Over the past several decades, the share of U.S. workers holding an occupational license has grown sharply. When designed and implemented carefully, licensing can offer important health and safety protections to consumers, as well as benefits to workers. However, the current licensing regime in the United States also creates substantial costs, and often the requirements for obtaining a license are not in sync with the skills needed for the job. There is evidence that licensing requirements raise the price of goods and services, restrict employment opportunities, and make it more difficult for workers to take their skills across State lines. Too often, policymakers do not carefully weigh these costs and benefits when making decisions about whether or how to regulate a profession through licensing...

This report outlines the growth of licensing over the past several decades, its costs and benefits, and its impacts on workers and work arrangements. The report recommends several best practices to ensure that licensing protects consumers without placing unnecessary restrictions on employment, innovation, or access to important goods and services.

More than five years later two things are clear; 1) Occupational licensure reform is a bipartisan priority, and 2) Little has changed in the last five years to suggest the issue is not even more urgent than it was when President Barack Obama published the report, "Occupational Licensing: A Framework for Policymakers."

Kansas City's Kauffman Foundation wrote about the need for occupational licensure reform as a way to kickstart the COVID economic recovery.ⁱ And, The Brookings Institution has written that, "Evidence suggests that licensing has had an important influence on wage determination, benefits, employment, and prices in ways that impose net costs on society with little improvement to service quality, health, and safety."ⁱⁱⁱ

Also, you will likely hear from opponents of this bill that they agree reforms are needed but that their given industry is different and worthy of exemption from reform. Unfortunately, this lays bare so much of the protectionist mentality that makes Kansans occupational licensing regime a stumbling block for so many looking to ascend the economic ladder. Occupational licensing too often makes it harder for entrepreneurs to pursue their dream, raises prices on the rest of us by limiting consumer choice, and has little nexus to real public health or safety.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge you to pass SB 10.

ⁱ https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/licensing_report_final_nonembargo.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://www.kauffman.org/currents/10-ways-for-small-businesses-to-overcome-covid-19/>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/reforming_occupational_licensing_policies/