

Testimony in support of Raised H.B. No. 6485 "An Act Concerning a Barbershop Apprenticeship Program"

Good morning Senator Gerratana, State Representative Johnson, and honorable members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Julio Rivera 4 old Schoolhouse RD of Willimantic, I am here to speak on behalf of many other barber that were not able to come today, in support of Raised H.B. No. 6485 "An Act Concerning a Barbershop Apprenticeship Program.

We the barbers of Willimantic and Windham County are supportive of the language and we ask the committee to vote in favor of H.B. 6485; however, we ask you to consider the possibility of adjusting or change the language of the bill to actually create the barbershop apprenticeship program this year. LPRAC Commissioner Lourdes Montalvo and Commission Acting Director Werner Oyanadel already met with all the stakeholders and already has response to all the questions listed with this and are ready to present the findings during the public hearing.

For me being a barber has kept me away from problems. This is my profession since practically I was a child. I learned by observing others in my family who for generations have support their families by cutting hair. I'm proud to be able to teach the new generations of my family that by cutting hair they can earn a decent living.

I have worked as a Barber for many years and had the opportunity to learn everything you need to do in barbering. As all the other Barber present and those not able to come today I want to do things by the law. Only that there is a problem because the economy does not allowed us to do so. As you heard today many of us do this profession because is something we lean from a family member, and I could dare to say is cultural because is something we are doing for generations after generations. We take all necessary precautions. Although some have not gone to school, they know that there are diseases and that we have to be very careful. So when we cut hair, we do it as if the person were a member of our family, and we wont harm our family. Furthermore, the people who come to us become friends some close friends and we appreciate them and respect them. Besides they know if we don't do what we suppose.

For the pass 2 years in Willimantic we are incredibly nervous, because local authorities don't leave us in peace. What I don't understand is that there are no reports that we have done something wrong where someone had become sick after a hair cut. I do not understand why were persecuted like criminals.

as it is the only way to earn the money to support of our families, you leave us no other alternative that go from House to House cutting hair and there you can not be monitor. At least in the barber shop, they can go and inspect all equipment.

Thanks for your support in the past, I know hat Lourdes can offer other stories because she talked to more than 80 barbers statewide and I want to take this opportunity to mention those who leave the state because they have no alternative and move to New York or Rhode Island because is more easy to get the license and have other programs not offer in Connecticut.

Today day is hard because, as the majority of barbers we want to do things by the law but we don't have many alternatives. Today I am asking for an opportunity not only for me but for many other barbers that the only thing we want is make a decent living. Please support a reform that can be implemented a soon as possible.

Thank you, for your time and the opportunity to listen to my testimony.