MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND LABOR

Eighty-Third Session
April 4, 2025

The Committee on Commerce and Labor was called to order by Chair Elaine H. Marzola at 11:34 a.m. on Friday, April 4, 2025, in Room 4100 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 1 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda [Exhibit A], the Attendance Roster [Exhibit B], and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Elaine H. Marzola, Chair
Assemblymember Sandra Jauregui, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Natha C. Anderson
Assemblymember Max E. Carter II
Assemblymember Lisa K. Cole
Assemblymember Melissa R. Hardy
Assemblymember Heidi Kasama
Assemblymember Brittney M. Miller
Assemblymember Daniele Monroe-Moreno
Assemblymember PK O'Neill
Assemblymember Erica P. Roth
Assemblymember Selena Torres-Fossett
Assemblymember Toby Yurek

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblymember Steve Yeager (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Assembly District No. 8

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marjorie Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst
Daniel Peinado, Committee Counsel
Logan B. Service, Committee Manager

Denise Dimarzo, Committee Secretary
George Whalen, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tray Abney, representing Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc. (LegalShield)
Mark Nelms, Vice President and Assistant Legal Counsel, Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc. (LegalShield), Ada, Oklahoma
Adam Plain, Insurance Regulation Liaison, Division of Insurance, Department of Business and Industry
Jodi Stephens, representing Wireless Infrastructure Association
Karmen Rajamani, Vice President, Government Affairs, Wireless Infrastructure Association
Trevor Parrish, Manager, Government Affairs, Vegas Chamber
Joshua Skaggs, Legislative Affairs Director, Nevada Republican Party
Omar Saucedo, Director, External Affairs, AT&T Nevada
Aida Loudyi, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada; and Board-Certified Rheumatologist, Rheumatoid, Inflammatory and Immune Diseases Clinic, Las Vegas, Nevada
Al Rojas, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Samantha Barnes, representing Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance
Nicole Rourke, Director of Government and Public Affairs, City of Henderson
Ashley Garza Kennedy, Principal Management Analyst, Government Affairs, Department of Administrative Services, Clark County
Florence Jameson, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Keiko Duncan, Medicaid Pharmacy Director, Division of Health Care Financing and Policy, Department of Health and Human Services
Saharat Buntha, Youth Fellow, One APIA Nevada
Pauline Ng Lee, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada; and Board Member, Keystone Corporation
Renee Ruiz, Community and Government Relations Organizer, National Nurses Organizing Committee
Phan Nguyen, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Shelly Capurro, representing Nevada Association of Health Plans
Paul Young, representing Pharmaceutical Care Management Association
Jennifer McDonald, Cities Work Director and Assistant Director of Activism, Institute for Justice
Gabriel Herrera, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
James Anthony, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Savannah Harmon, Owner, Salon Kvltvre and Suites, Las Vegas, Nevada
Wingki Lui, Youth Fellow, One APIA Nevada
Patrinna Murrell, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Cesar Minera, Grassroots Engagement Director, Libre Initiative
Maurice Washington, Community Engagement Director, Americans for Prosperity
Joe Hill, Policy Analyst, Retail Association of Nevada

Angel Wei, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Rou Lee, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Laura Nowlan, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Christian Cardenas, Director, Grassroots Operations, Americans for Prosperity
Anahit Baghshetsyan, Research Assistant, Nevada Policy
Wiz Rouzard, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Hugh Anderson, Government Affairs Committee Chair, Vegas Chamber
Traci Simon, Owner, Get a Haircut Barbershop, Las Vegas, Nevada
LaNiqua McCloud; Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
A'Esha Goins, Founder, Black Joy Consulting, Las Vegas, Nevada
William C. Horne, representing State Board of Cosmetology
Brenda Castaneda, Office Administrator, Northern Nevada Barber Academy, Sparks, Nevada
Kevin Polanco, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Matthew Lee, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Marcus Allen, Owner, Masterpiece Barber School, Las Vegas, Nevada
Gwen Braimoh, Executive Director, Expertise Cosmetology and Barbering Institute, Las Vegas, Nevada
Antinette Maestas, Secretary/Treasurer, State Barbers' Health and Sanitation Board
Carl L. Littles, Co-owner, Original Barber School, Las Vegas, Nevada
Nimi Dhaliwal Espinoza, School Director, Avalon Institute, Las Vegas, Nevada
Junis McDaniels, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Lisa Lewis, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Victor De Leon, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Chris Mann, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Benita Hollie, Campus Director, Euphoria Institute of Beauty Arts & Sciences, Las Vegas, Nevada
Melissa Martinez, Campus Director, Milan Institute, Las Vegas, Nevada
Ramon Green, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Andeen M. Rose, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Angie Bernardy, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Andres Dominguez, Owner, Speakeasy Barbershop, Las Vegas, Nevada
Richard Bautista, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Robin Walsh, Campus Director, Milan Institute of Cosmetology, Reno, Nevada
Unidentified Speaker
Unidentified Caller
Vanessa Mascaro, Private Citizen

Chair Marzola:
[Roll was called and Committee rules and protocol were reviewed.] Welcome, everyone here in Carson City, those in Las Vegas, and anyone tuning in over the Internet. Today, we will hear four bills: Assembly Bill 225, Assembly Bill 290, Assembly Bill 423, and Assembly Bill 512. We will also conduct a work session. I will not be taking the Assembly bills in order. With that, we will move to our work session. It is not customary for the Committee to take testimony or otherwise rehear any bills during work sessions. However, I

may invite a witness to come forward for clarification or questions during our consideration of a measure. We will start with Assembly Bill 44.

Assembly Bill 44: Prohibits manipulating the price of an essential good or service in this State. (BDR 52-503)

Marjorie Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst:
[Submitted work session document, Exhibit C.] Assembly Bill 44 prohibits manipulating the price of an essential good or service in this state. Sponsored on behalf of the Attorney General, heard on March 5, 2025, and the proposed amendments are on the bill page.

Chair Marzola:
Members, are there any questions? [There were none.] I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass A.B. 44.

> ASSEMBLYMEMBER MILLER MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 44.
>
> ASSEMBLYMEMBER TORRES-FOSSETT SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the motion? [There was none.]

> THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEMBERS COLE, HARDY, KASAMA, AND YUREK VOTED NO. ASSEMBLYMEMBERS JAUREGUI, MONROE-MORENO, O'NEILL, AND YEAGER WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblymember Miller. Next is Assembly Bill 177.

Assembly Bill 177: Makes various changes relating to audiology, fitting and dispensing hearing aids and speech-language pathology. (BDR 54-199)

Marjorie Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst:
[Submitted work session document, Exhibit D.] Assembly Bill 177 makes various changes relating to audiology, fitting and dispensing hearing aids, and speech-language pathology. Sponsored by Assemblymember González, heard on February 24, 2025, and the amendments are on the bill page.

Chair Marzola:
Members, are there any questions on Assembly Bill 177? [There were none.] I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER MILLER MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 177.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER ANDERSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the motion? [There was none.]

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEMBERS JAUREGUI, MONROE-MORENO, O'NEILL, AND YEAGER WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblymember González. Next is Assembly Bill 259.

Assembly Bill 259: Establishes provisions governing prescription drugs. (BDR 40-165)

Marjorie Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst:
[Submitted work session document, Exhibit E.] Assembly Bill 259 establishes provisions governing prescription drugs. Sponsored by Assemblymember Considine, heard on March 12, 2025, and there are two proposed amendments on the bill page.

Chair Marzola:
Are there any questions on Assembly Bill 259? [There were none.] I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER MILLER MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 259.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER TORRES-FOSSETT SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the motion? [There was none.]

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEMBERS COLE, HARDY, KASAMA, AND YUREK VOTED NO. ASSEMBLYMEMBERS JAUREGUI, MONROE-MORENO, O'NEILL, AND YEAGER WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblymember Considine. Our last bill for work session is Assembly Bill 466.

Assembly Bill 466: Revises certain notice requirements imposed on an insurer who issues a policy of portable electronics insurance. (BDR 57-797)

Marjorie Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst:
[Submitted work session document, Exhibit F.] Assembly Bill 466 revises certain notice requirements imposed on an insurer who issues a policy of portable electronics insurance.

Sponsored by Assemblymember Kasama, heard on April 2, 2025, and there are no proposed amendments.

Chair Marzola:
Members, are there any questions? [There were none.] I will entertain a motion to do pass.

> ASSEMBLYMEMBER MILLER MOVED TO DO PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 466.
>
> ASSEMBLYMEMBER TORRES-FOSSETT SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the motion? [There was none.]

> THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEMBERS JAUREGUI, MONROE-MORENO, O'NEILL, AND YEAGER WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblymember Kasama. With that, we will move to our first bill of today. It is Assembly Bill 512. I will now open the hearing on Assembly Bill 512. This measure revises provisions relating to casualty insurance. Mr. Abney, you may begin when you are ready.

Assembly Bill 512: Revises provisions relating to casualty insurance. (BDR 57-1089)

Tray Abney, representing Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc. (LegalShield):
Next to me today is Mark Nelms. He is vice president and assistant general counsel for LegalShield. We are here to present and support Assembly Bill 512.

We will have Mr. Nelms briefly walk through the background and reason for the bill, and then we will walk you through the bill at the end, which will not take very long at all, I promise. I will turn it over to Mr. Nelms.

Mark Nelms, Vice President and Assistant Legal Counsel, Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc. (LegalShield), Ada, Oklahoma:
We are here to support the proposed bill, A.B. 512. Our company is headquartered in Ada, Oklahoma, which is about 2.5 hours northeast of Dallas, Texas. I am very proud of our company. We have been in business now for over 53 years providing legal plans. I am going to talk about legal plans today and how they work. As long as they have been around, there are still many who are not familiar with them.

We started doing business in Nevada in 1987, and I very much appreciate our history in Nevada and the business we have done here. In 1995, the law firm of Dempsey, Roberts & Smith, Ltd., the current provider law firm in the state of Nevada, became the first provider law firm for the state of Nevada, and they have been doing this a long time. I am going to explain a little bit about how a provider law firm works. What is important is that

LegalShield itself does not provide the legal services. We provide access through legal plans to these provider attorneys and the service they provide.

To describe how a legal plan works, if you had a family legal plan, your first point of contact would be with Dempsey, Roberts & Smith. You would contact the law firm; they could provide consultation on any personal legal matter that you had. They could also do research if that would be helpful to you. They could write a letter or make a phone call on your behalf. There are a variety of other benefits in the plan. I did want to bring up just briefly estate planning. Most Americans do not have their estate plan in order. Through the plan, they can help you with a will, power of attorney, and advanced directive, which is important to a family.

If needed, there are referral attorneys outside the provider law firm. We have a network of providers throughout the state. I also appreciate that you have access to legal help anywhere in the 50 states with your legal plan. If your Nevada firm could not handle the matter—I will give an example; it was a Friday afternoon, and a member in another state needed a contract reviewed. The provider firm determined that it was not governed by their state law; they needed to get them help in another state. They simply contacted the provider in the other state. They contacted the member; they reviewed the documents and saved him a great deal of money. I thought about who, on a Friday afternoon, would have the ability to find help with a contract in another state. That was the power of having a legal plan.

What is important is that our provider law firm model is a non-indemnity-type legal service plan. We do not indemnify our members for legal fees. We do not pay claims; we do not reimburse members.

This proposed legislation will simply bring clarity and modernization to the law here in Nevada and exempt these modern non-indemnity legal plans from insurance. This is very important; this will align Nevada with the vast majority of states now in the United States that treat us as non-insurance. At present, there are only six other states other than Nevada where non-indemnity legal plans like ours are substantially treated as insurance by the insurance regulator, and those states are Alaska, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Virginia. The remaining states do not. This would align Nevada with the majority of states.

We have also seen legislative changes in several states similar to what we are trying to do in Nevada. I wanted to share that with you; those states include Washington, Arizona, North Dakota, Nebraska, Tennessee, Texas, and Arkansas. Again, this would align Nevada with those states as well. The support for legal plans promotes access to justice. I know there are many attorneys on the Committee, and I appreciate that. Most all states in the last 10 or 15 years have looked for ways to provide everyday individuals, families, and small businesses with legal help, and they see it as a problem.

My wife is in the health care industry; you will not hear about this issue as often in health care. But I thought about it; we want to go to a doctor; we want to go to a professional to get

our health care. Well, think about a legal situation when one party has counsel and the other party does not. One of the best speeches I ever heard on this issue came from a very tenured judge out of New York. Of all things, he brought up a landlord-tenant scenario, and he was saying that landlords normally are going to have counsel. By the way, I love my landlords; this is not negative toward landlords. But the majority of the time tenants do not have counsel. He showed how this one issue in a family's life, not only did they face eviction, but they also faced a judgment, which goes on their credit for seven years, they faced potential garnishment, and then go try to find other housing. Once you have been evicted, it is a real problem, and this shows how it snowballs.

That brought up a time when I was able to help a member early in my career, and it was a landlord-tenant situation. That member was a tenant, and because they had a legal plan, they had counsel, and I went to that member that day. All the other defendants on the docket that day, only one had counsel, and that is the one that had a legal plan. The remaining defendants had default judgments or agreed judgments entered that day. We were prepared and ready and got a great outcome for that member, so I thought about that.

Think about other areas of law like family law, child custody, garnishments, and unemployment. I had a member in another state whose provider helped them with unemployment benefits. That was a huge issue for the family and that individual in getting those unemployment benefits. I thought, who would hire an attorney for that kind of issue? That is what these legal plans help people do.

I would also bring up this: just like my home state of Oklahoma, Nevada's Supreme Court and Oklahoma's Supreme Court put together a commission. The point they made here in Nevada, the purpose was to provide legal services to persons with limited means. I saw your Supreme Court Building—it is very beautiful.

There is a real gap in those who try to qualify for legal aid—and I want to say this, states are spending a huge sum of money on legal aid. Legal aid does an amazing job, I appreciate legal aid, but for most, they are not going to qualify for legal aid and there are not many areas of law that legal aid covers. There is a big gap with those who can and cannot qualify, but a legal plan they can pay for a monthly subscription.

Finally, I talked about the 50 states. The other thing I appreciate is this: think about everybody that you represent. Your citizens in Nevada, across the state, no matter if they live in a remote area, a rural area, or an urban area. With a legal plan, they have access to legal help. Assembly Bill 512 will simply clarify the non-indemnity legal plans are not insurance products and should not be subject to the Nevada Insurance Code.

Tray Abney:
Briefly, let us look at the bill language, and I just want to point out that I am working from the amendment that is posted on the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System [Exhibit G], not the original bill.

Short and sweet; I will not say simple because that is a kiss of death for a bill here, but it is short. What we have done here is a new section adding legal expenses to the definition of different variations and varieties of casualty insurance. We have outlined if a plan reimburses or pays someone for specific legal services or legal expenses, it would be considered an insurance plan under casualty insurance.

To the point of why we are here today. We also included language that outlines what is not legal expense casualty insurance, and that would be the fixed prearranged payments language you see at the end of the new blue language. I always feel stupid when I am sitting next to a lawyer describing what our bill is trying to say. I want to make sure I have that right, Mr. Nelms, if you have anything to add.

Mark Nelms:
That is correct. It is a clarification for the non-indemnity legal plans as we discussed.

Tray Abney:
Madam Chair, we are ready for any questions the Committee may have.

Chair Marzola:
Mr. Nelms, I heard that you practiced saying Nevada before appearing in front of us today. I have to say thank you; I am impressed. Thank you for putting in the work. With that, I will go to questions.

Assemblymember Kasama:
I just have a quick question: does LegalShield have an ownership interest in any of the law firms you work with? Is it similar to a medical plan where you are a part of the HMO [health maintenance organization] plan, versus the PPO [preferred provider organization] plan? Like they are outside the network?

Mark Nelms:
We ourselves do not provide the services, and we do not have a relationship like that. We have arrangements with these provider law firms, and now there are 35, last count, across the United States and parts of Canada.

Again, they are the first point of contact. We have an arrangement with them where they have agreed to provide the services under the plan for the member. Then there are the referral attorneys outside the providers that can be referred to. When you say in-network, the first point of contact is your provider law firm, like Dempsey, Roberts & Smith, if that helps.

Chair Marzola:
Just to clarify before I go to the next member, I have a plan that would say LegalShield, correct? LegalShield does not provide me any legal advice. You are almost like a referral source. You would refer me to attorneys who are on your list. Is that correct?

Mark Nelms:
You always go to your provider law firm first; that is why our model is unique. They are the ones who do a referral outside; we do not provide the referral from our home office. They go to the provider—the majority of matters, like I was giving you examples of earlier, are taken care of by that provider law firm. Then if they need to be referred out, that is when we have referral attorneys, or like I gave you the example where they need help in another state, then they would refer to another provider firm there or to a referral attorney there. We ourselves do not provide the counsel and we do not provide the referrals. We provide a legal plan that provides them access to all that.

Chair Marzola:
Maybe I am just a little confused; my provider law firm here, let us say in Carson City, I would obtain that through LegalShield. Correct?

Mark Nelms:
That is correct.

Chair Marzola:
To my second question, LegalShield in no way provides any sort of legal advice.

Mark Nelms:
That is correct.

Chair Marzola:
Committee members, are there any additional questions?

Assemblymember O'Neill:
Building upon the Chair's question, LegalShield, do I get the referral from them telephonically or by Zoom? In other words, I do not meet with them in person.

Mark Nelms:
The majority of the time it will be by phone or text, those types of things. There are times, of course, when you will meet in person with an attorney.

Assemblymember O'Neill:
If I may expand upon my question. They may refer me to a local law firm, and that is where—how do they determine—I live here in Carson, or if you go out to Fallon, I do not know how well you know our state, I apologize. But when I say Fallon, we are getting down to rural; when I talk about Hawthorne, it is rural, as rural can be. Let alone Eureka or Ely.

Do they find a legal counsel for me they contract with, or would I go out and, I guess, drill down the whole system—

Mark Nelms:
Absolutely. They will take care of the referral for you. You are not having to find your own attorney. They are going to get you matched with an attorney who is willing to provide you benefits under your membership and who handles that area of law and, of course, whom they have relationships with.

I have good friends who are referral attorneys. Before coming to the home office, as in-house counsel, I actually was with the provider law firm in Oklahoma. Much of my career has been spent helping members. My former firm, the current provider in Oklahoma, is a full-service law firm. They handle a lot of areas of law across a lot of areas of the state. There are times when once you have talked to an attorney and they have determined your needs, benefits, and how you would like to proceed, or if you do need somebody in another county or area, they will refer you, or sometimes the firm will also handle it from where they are.

Chair Marzola:
Committee members, any additional questions? [There were none.] We will open up for testimony in support of A.B. 512. Is there anyone here in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the line wishing to testify in support? [There was no one.] I will move to testimony in opposition to A.B. 512. Is there anyone here in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the line wishing to testify in opposition? [There was no one.] We will move to testimony in neutral. Is there anyone in Carson City who wishes to testify in neutral to A.B. 512?

Adam Plain, Insurance Regulation Liaison, Division of Insurance, Department of Business and Industry:
The Division is neutral on A.B. 512. We did submit some written testimony and essentially a constituent letter on the legal services issue [Exhibit H]. I just want to clarify for the record that the Division has regulated certain legal expense products under the statute in question under the miscellaneous category for several years because it is an undefined product. We use a standard, it is the fortuitous event standard, meaning if you are benefiting in some way, it is considered an insurance product. We are fine with the redefinition, if that is what the Legislature chooses. It does not really matter to us anyway; we will regulate it and enforce it however you choose to define it.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else wishing to testify in neutral? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Las Vegas or on the line wishing to testify in neutral on A.B. 512? [There was no one.] Would you like to give any closing remarks? [There were none.] I will now close the hearing on A.B. 512. I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 423, which revises provisions relating to business. I will give you a couple of seconds, and you may begin when you are ready.

Assembly Bill 423: Revises provisions relating to business. (BDR 53-852)

Assemblymember Lisa K. Cole, Assembly District No. 4:
I am joined today by my copresenters Jodi Stephens here in Carson City and Karmen Rajamani on Zoom. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, but oftentimes they are overlooked when it comes to legislative policies. I myself am a small-business owner and have been for many years. When I set up one of my companies in 2018, I completed all of the many steps I needed to in order to operate. I will not go into details, but there are a lot of steps, including one that actually confused me. I had to set up an account with the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR). When I set up my DETR account, I learned that even though I was both the owner and the sole employee, I would still have to pay contributions into the Unemployment Compensation Fund, understanding that if I needed to let myself go, that probably meant the business was over and I certainly was not going to file for an unemployment claim. I argued the point, but it did not help.

Over the last seven years, I have contributed roughly $4,000 into that fund. Another company that I work with is in the same boat and contributed almost $6,000 to that same fund. It may not seem like a lot of money, but for a small business, it is.

To that end, the first portion of my bill was drafted to create a carve-out for this situation. I direct you to the friendly amendment from DETR that is uploaded to the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System, and you should have in front of you [Exhibit I]. The new section 3 adds an option for sole proprietors to elect a reimbursement framework as opposed to contributions. I can go into details of what that means if anyone has questions, but suffice it to say, it does solve the issue.

By adding section 13, it gives DETR the time it needs to implement the changes. I am going to give DETR a huge shout-out. I know I am new, but I am not sure how often a state agency goes above and beyond to assist a legislator and not just to address an issue but to find an existing framework within which to work the fix, avoiding a fiscal note in the process. Thank you to DETR; you all rock, and I appreciate you.

The second portion of my bill, found in sections 6 through 8, creates a new tool for the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) and the eight regional economic development authorities throughout the state to recruit small businesses that do not qualify for large tax abatements or other incentives. This is a way to bring new small businesses to Nevada and further strengthen our economic backbone.

By eliminating the cost of state business license fees for up to two years, we show these small businesses that we see them and appreciate their efforts to build a strong Nevada. The savings are small for these companies but mighty, between $400 to $1,000 total over two years, depending on the type of entity the business forms. If the business fails to achieve the required metrics, they have to pay the money back to the state. The concepts in this portion of the bill are a result of thoughtful conversations with both GOED and the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada and are generally framed like those for larger

incentive packages. This allows for a nuanced approach when it comes to larger population areas and rural areas, giving appropriate tools to all the development authorities.

Now, we come to the third section of A.B. 423, which provides for a streamlined process for colocation of personal wireless facilities on existing towers. As I am not an expert in this field, I have my copresenters and I am going to, with your permission, turn it over to them.

Jodi Stephens, representing Wireless Infrastructure Association:
On Zoom, we have the vice president of government affairs, Ms. Karmen Rajamani, who is going to help explain and answer any questions. The bottom line of the legislation is, we wanted to look at the amendment we had when we originally gave the language to the Legislative Counsel Bureau. It was very prescriptive, and after conversations with Clark, Henderson, and other municipalities, we realized that it was going to be more problematic than we had initially intended. We had a phone call yesterday and significantly simplified the language [Exhibit J]. I will let Ms. Rajamani jump into our section of the bill, section 10.

Karmen Rajamani, Vice President, Government Affairs, Wireless Infrastructure Association:
I am testifying in support of A.B. 423, section 10. Our members represent the companies that build, operate, and maintain the infrastructure necessary to achieve continuous coverage and fixed and mobile broadband service in every community, including in Nevada. As Ms. Stephens explained, we had a larger section, but after our discussion with Clark County and the City of Henderson, we really shortened it. Essentially, it says that applicants and municipalities need to comply with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) federal rules governing telecommunication tower facilities. It is as simple as that.

The purpose of doing this is there are a few things. First, it preserves what works, that federal law has proven extremely effective in bringing nationwide wireless deployment since 1996, simplifying and standardizing the process for both localities and industry. This language will encourage the deployment of innovative technologies.

Without this wireless infrastructure, literally there is no skeleton to support new technologies. This language will also provide incentives for collocating on existing telecommunication towers, which is really the fastest and least-intrusive means of installing needed wireless infrastructure. It supports wireless communication and connectivity, which is critical to public safety situations such as emergency services, police, and fire, which depend on wireless service to communicate with each other and with the public.

Many of you may already know that over 80 percent of 911 calls come from a wireless device. In total, this little section provides uniformity and wireless deployment. It brings predictability, proportionality, and transparency to the municipal permitting and deployment processes, and for these reasons, we support section 10 of A.B. 423, and I am happy to answer any questions [Submitted information document, Exhibit K].

Assemblymember Cole:
With that, we are ready for questions.

Chair Marzola:
Committee members, are there any questions?

Assemblymember O'Neill:
Great bill. I do have one question: you are saying you are the owner of a business, you had to pay it. What if my wife and I formed a business? This only says one employee; what is permissible for expansion of that?

Assemblymember Cole:
That is a very good question, and I can reach out to DETR to see if they would be amenable to doing something different if it is a husband-and-wife team. I also owned a business at one point with my husband, so I understand that question. I will reach back out and let you know.

Chair Marzola:
We can move to testimony in support of A.B. 423. Is there anyone in Carson City wishing to testify in support?

Trevor Parrish, Manager, Government Affairs, Vegas Chamber:
The Chamber is in support of A.B. 423. A business entity owned and operated by a single individual ought to have the ability to opt itself out of the State Unemployment Insurance Fund [*sic*]. The Chamber views this policy as a fair and equitable decision for a business owner to make for themselves. Furthermore, this bill has no fiscal impact on the unemployment insurance fund because the business owner that does not contribute to the fund would cede the right to use the program.

Joshua Skaggs, Legislative Affairs Director, Nevada Republican Party:
I am here in support of A.B. 423. Sections 2 and 3 allow owners of small, closely held businesses to opt out of unemployment insurance for themselves, which creates greater flexibility and the potential to reinvest resources into growth and job creation. The proposed fee exemption in section 6 directly encourages job creation and investment in Nevada by incentivizing entrepreneurs to start businesses here. Assembly Bill 423 helps small businesses, which in return helps all of Nevada. Please vote yes on A.B. 423.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else in Carson City who wishes to testify in support? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Las Vegas wishing to testify in support of A.B. 423?

Omar Saucedo, Director, External Affairs, AT&T Nevada:
As a wireless company, we appreciate the predictability and the expedited nature of the piece of the bill that applies directly to wireless infrastructure. AT&T has a number of upgrades that we are making to our cellular towers. Specifically, we are changing radio providers.

Anything we can do to expedite that process and make it easier for us to make those changes and enhance coverage in southern Nevada and in all parts of our state is greatly appreciated.

Aida Loudyi, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I came here actually for a different bill, but this one makes total sense, especially the first two sections. The third section I am not knowledgeable enough about, so I am not sure if it is going to hinder or help. As a business owner, I am a physician, and before that—small-business owners need not be hindered with more taxation, especially if they cannot get it back in any way; that is it.

Al Rojas, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am fully in support of this bill, and I ditto the majority of the statements, pretty much all the statements, that were in support. We need to give more opportunities to small businesses here in the state of Nevada.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else wishing to testify in support in Las Vegas? [There was no one.] Is there anyone on the line?

Samantha Barnes, representing Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance:
We appreciate Assemblymember Cole for bringing this bill forward, and we are here in full support.

[A letter in support, Exhibit L, was submitted but not discussed and will become part of the record.]

Chair Marzola:
We will move to testimony in opposition to A.B. 423. Is there anyone in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the line wishing to testify in opposition? [There was no one.] We will move to testimony in neutral. Is there anyone in Carson City wishing to testify in neutral?

Nicole Rourke, Director of Government and Public Affairs, City of Henderson:
We are here to thank the sponsor as well as Wireless Infrastructure Association for working with us extensively to modify section 10 and alleviate our concerns and that we are certainly in compliance with FCC regulations. Those are rather in-depth, if you have ever dealt with them; our team is pretty on it, and I hear a laugh behind me knowing that. We appreciate the hard work that went into that amendment. I realize it looks very simple, but it is certainly a lot of back and forth, and we appreciate their efforts.

Ashley Garza Kennedy, Principal Management Analyst, Government Affairs, Department of Administrative Services, Clark County:
I will ditto all the comments that were made by my colleague from the City of Henderson, and we appreciate the bill proponents working with us extensively. They had stated on the record that this is really about bringing predictability for the industry, and it also gives predictability to the local governments. Usually on modifications, these cell towers have

multiple departments that are involved; our land use, Department of Comprehensive Planning; State Public Works Division; and Clark County Building Department. This is very helpful to us, and we appreciate them working with us.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else in Carson City wishing to testify in neutral? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Las Vegas or on the line wishing to testify in neutral on A.B. 423? [There was no one.] Assemblymember, would you like to give any final remarks?

Assemblymember Cole:
I just wanted to say thank you very much for the opportunity and a shout-out to your staff. The committee manager and everybody have been amazing to work with and they work really hard, especially right now.

Chair Marzola:
I will now close the hearing on A.B. 423. I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 290, which revises provisions relating to prior authorization for medical or dental care under health insurance plans. Welcome, Assemblymember Nguyen, you may begin when you are ready.

Assembly Bill 290: Revises provisions relating to prior authorization for medical or dental care under health insurance plans. (BDR 57-861)

Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Assembly District No. 8:
We are pleased to present Assembly Bill 290, a bipartisan effort to reform and bring clarity and transparency to the prior authorization processes in Nevada. What you have before you are months of collaborative work by many stakeholders, doctors, private insurers, and many others who have come to the table. Usually, folks do not show up to the table, but we must address this issue that affects Nevadans, and the stakeholders all showed up to do the work.

As you will hear in the testimonies, doctors are pleading with insurance companies to help treat their patients. Nevadans are desperate for action, and this issue, A.B. 290, will positively impact doctors and patients. In Nevada we do so much to recruit and retain quality health care providers, and this legislation will be part of this effort to keep quality health care services and providers in Nevada.

With me today are my co-primary sponsor, Assemblymember Yurek, who will begin the presentation, and Dr. Jameson, who will provide clinical context. We also have Dr. Keiko Duncan, pharmacy director from the Division of Health and Human Services, and our Medicaid team to answer any questions you may have. Assemblymember Edgeworth is also available for any medically specific questions. With that, I will pass it on to Assemblymember Yurek.

Assemblymember Toby Yurek, Assembly District No. 19:
I want to start and ask the question, Why are we here? Specifically, we are dealing with prior authorization, which is a process that is meant to ensure appropriate use of care. This has become, unfortunately, an obstacle to timely treatment. It has become burdensome; it is inconsistently applied and increasingly automated in ways that seem to harm patient outcomes. Assembly Bill 290 is about restoring accountability, transparency, and critical oversight. To help bring this into proper perspective and set up this bill, I would like to introduce Dr. Jameson.

Florence Jameson, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
More than ever, I am deeply grateful for your dedicated efforts, the sacrifices you make, and the privilege of speaking to you today on A.B. 290.

I have practiced and am still practicing as an active physician obstetrician-gynecologist (OB-GYN) in Nevada for over 40 years. It is my greatest joy to care for my patients. My passion has always been ensuring access to quality health care for everyone. Every life is of infinite value, and everyone should have the opportunity to have timely access to health care and the opportunity for a healthy and as long a life as possible.

To that end, I founded Volunteers in Medicine of Southern Nevada, the largest free medical clinic in Nevada, which provides comprehensive care to the uninsured. As a free clinic, we do not require prior authorization, and it allows us to deliver our patients' essential medical care, diagnostic tests, and medications in a timely fashion. Everyone deserves such timely access to vital health care.

Today, I am here to discuss prior authorizations and the resulting tsunami of negative outcomes. We talk about unintended consequences all the time; there is no better example than when prior authorization has gone awry. As we heard, prior authorizations were meant to be used as an effective tool to ensure timely access to quality medical care and to reduce fraud and abuse. It was never intended to be a barrier to essential health care.

There should never be unnecessary delays or denials for a vital diagnostic test, medications, and medical services, often lifesaving. When it comes to medical care, time is always of the essence. When we ask our patients, What challenges are you facing with your insurance? The most common response we receive, overwhelmingly, is prior authorization. Out of 1,000 physicians surveyed by the American Medical Association, approximately 25 percent of them reported serious adverse events for their patients. Seven percent indicated it led to a patient's disability, permanent bodily damage, or even death.

Congress is finally acknowledging our patient messages and cries for help. Recently, it found the use of prior authorization in the Medicare Advantage Plans has skyrocketed to 46 million requests in 2022, burdening the providers and delaying health care. With 46 million requests for Medicare Advantage Plans alone, they were found guilty of corporate malfeasance. Congress then did the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services final rule, you are all

aware of in 2024, that aims to regulate the government plans, reduce prior authorization time frames, and enhance transparency.

Assembly Bill 290 will do this and much more. The additional work and stress—let me stress, stress that prior authorizations put on physicians and patients in Nevada—is overwhelming. As a gynecologist, 1 in 8 of our women patients will get breast cancer by the time they are 80. In my practice, it is common to have an abnormal screening mammogram. After that, they need a diagnostic mammogram and an ultrasound; we wait 20 days for that approval. Then they usually need an MRI; we wait another 20 days for that approval. Then there is the ultrasound-guided biopsy and another 20 days for that approval. Then you have to start chemotherapy, and you have to be referred to a specialist, another 20 days. You start chemotherapy and surgery and more preauthorization and more delays.

In Nevada, due to the shortage of doctors, we can often wait four to six months to schedule surgery. We have yet to solve the doctor shortage, but we can do something to reduce the time frames for prior authorizations and provide some immediate relief for our patients. Many patients wait; I go through it with them all the time. They are so anxious about their cancer progressing and prognosis worsening and the possibility of dying from their cancer.

The reality is that many insurance companies function as a vertically integrated health care system. They operate with their own mail-order pharmacies and their own pharmacy benefit managers, and they inflate the cost of cancer and HIV treatments 1,000 percent. They own hospitals and are the largest employers of physicians.

In the United States this results in them being the single greatest vertical monopoly. These insurance companies are massive monopolies that oversee millions of patients in general and generate billions in profits. All I am asking here today is to help level the playing field so that all patients in Nevada, like you and like me, can have a fair chance of timely access to appropriate medical care. This is what A.B. 290 will do and so much more, and I am so excited to see us finally doing some serious legislation on this.

Assemblymember Yurek:
Hopefully, we have just laid out a brief foundation of what this bill is aiming to address, and it is the issue of prior authorizations. Assemblymember Nguyen and I will go through the bill. We have coordinated a succinct version of a presentation to save everybody time. I would like to make sure everybody is aware that we uploaded to the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS) the conceptual amendment [Exhibit M] that is the product of a lot of collaboration and work with stakeholders who I am hoping today are going to show up and talk about the work that has gone into this bill to present some good legislation as well. I will hand it over to Assemblymember Nguyen, and we will start the section-by-section walk-through.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
I am proud to present the amendment [Exhibit M]. It has been a great joint effort with so many stakeholders in the past few months. Each of our sponsors has had their own form of prior authorizations, so I am glad to be joined by them to help deliver for Nevadans. You can see those sponsors up top, and I really want to acknowledge all the sponsors who have worked hard on this bill.

Sections 2 through 12 define key terms. Adverse determinations in section 3 are denial modification of care based on insurance reviews. Emergency services under section 4, updated to change "unborn child" to "fetus." Other terms defined include health carrier, insured, provider of health care, network, and urgent health care. These definitions align with state and federal standards and provide consistent interpretation.

Section 15 is deleted, which previously addressed a presumption of medical necessity for emergency services that has been removed through the conceptual amendment. Emergency services are already protected under existing Nevada law, which prohibits insurers from requiring prior authorizations for such care.

In section 13, as altered in the conceptual amendment, it ensures that adverse determination on prior authorization requests must be made only by licensed physicians or dentists who: hold an unrestricted license in any U.S. state or territory, have relevant training experience, or have clinical practice relating to the condition in question. Further, the adverse determination is reviewed and affirmed by a medical director of the health carrier or similar employee who is in charge of the medical operations of the health carrier.

Additionally, before issuing a denial based on medical necessity, the insurer must offer the treating provider a live phone or video conversation with the reviewing provider before rendering an initial determination on the request. Any denial must be promptly communicated in writing with specific reasons for the denial, any missing or insufficient documentation identified, clear appeal instructions, and appeals must resolve in a timely manner, and the person deciding the appeal must meet stricter criteria than the original reviewer, including advanced qualifications in the specialty involved.

Section 14, duration of the approval, as updated in the conceptual amendment, provides continuity and certainty. Prior authorizations remain valid for 6 months. When a patient changes insurance, prior authorizations from the previous plan must be honored for the first 90 days as long as they were issued within the previous 6 months, the insurer or the insurance provider of the health care transmitted completed documentation of such approvals in a timely manner, the specific care in the request is not affirmatively excluded under the new policy. This protects patients undergoing ongoing treatment from unnecessary disruption.

In section 19, it is critical that, on the time frames and processes, it sets clear, enforceable timelines. For non-urgent care, the insurer must respond within 7 calendar days. For urgent care, they must respond within 48 hours. If more documentation is needed, the insurer must request it within those same time frames and decide within 7 days for non-urgent or 48 hours for urgent after receiving it.

This section also requires insurers to publish their prior authorization procedure and criteria online in a manner that uses clear language that is understandable to an ordinary layperson and in a place that is readily accessible and conspicuous to insureds and the public. The conceptual amendment strengthens publications and notice requirements.

Assemblymember Yurek:
Section 13 addresses artificial intelligence (AI) and its use in prior authorizations. Under the conceptual amendment, if a health care provider uses AI or automated decision tools, it may not issue or uphold an adverse determination unless a licensed provider independently reviews and affirms that decision. It also says insurers must publicly disclose that, one, they use AI; two, a general explanation of how it works; and three, the types of data that it relies on. Of course, this ensures that human clinical judgment remains central in the decision-making process.

Section 17 requires insurers to publish annual data, including the number of requests, the number of approvals and denials, the numbers of appeals and reversals, as well as the top five reasons for denials, the average response times, disaggregated by specialty and type of care. The conceptual amendment here ensures that this type of information is easily accessible and prohibits disclosure of any personal identifiable information.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
Section 18 reinforces accountability on state oversight; insurers must submit the same data to the Commissioner of Insurance, who compiles a biennial report with recommendations for further reform. That report is submitted to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Commerce and Labor.

In section 25 [Exhibit N], originally A.B. 290 included Medicaid, Medicare, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); however, those provisions have been removed via the conceptual amendment striking section 25 to avoid triggering a significant fiscal note and potential federal compliance issues. We remain supportive of extending these protections in the future, but this amendment keeps the bill focused and fiscally viable.

Chair, with your permission, if I can bring up Dr. Duncan to speak to this amendment and what these changes will do to the fiscal note.

Keiko Duncan, Medicaid Pharmacy Director, Division of Health Care Financing and Policy, Department of Health and Human Services:
We just wanted to state that if the conceptual amendment as proposed is fully accepted, the Division's fiscal note would be amended to $0.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
I thought Dr. Duncan had a 20-minute presentation, but I guess she has spared all of you from that. The remaining sections 22 through 24 apply to the rules of nonprofit and self-insured entities, mirroring the private insurance reform for Medicaid and CHIP in case of future inclusion. Sections 26 through 41 make necessary statutory conforming changes throughout Nevada law.

Assemblymember Yurek:
That is our presentation. We tried to make it clear and concise, and hopefully you appreciated that. What we want to reiterate here is that A.B. 290 is about restoring balance and fairness to the prior authorization process. It sets enforceable timelines, it clarifies the role of AI, it strengthens oversight, and it ensures that only qualified medical professionals make decisions that are going to impact patient care. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the bill, and Chair, with your permission, we stand ready to entertain the Committee's questions.

Chair Marzola:
I do have to say, I know there has been great collaboration on this bill. A lot of people are coming together, and there were many stakeholder meetings. It is very much appreciated. Committee members, are there any questions?

Assemblymember Cole:
I think this is a really important issue, and I appreciate the thoughtfulness that went into it. As I was reading through it, the only question I had was, and maybe it is addressed in the amendment because I was not looking at that, is there any concern with further delay when it comes to the levels of approvals and appeals and whatnot? Especially with specialties. I just wonder if the insurance companies have all the specialties listed there. If that makes sense?

Assemblymember Yurek:
What I can tell you now is that this review process is in place. For example, if it is denied, usually it will be reviewed by another provider. Sometimes the licensing requirements might be a little different. They might be using an in-house or managed care organization, if you are familiar with them, using these types of folks to review it. What we are doing is we are just simply saying it has to be reviewed by a licensed professional and now within a time frame. We fully anticipate this is going to help shorten and accomplish the bill's intended purpose.

Florence Jameson:
This bill is not the most transparent thing, even though we are calling for transparency. It is a little complicated, but it puts a big onus on the insurers, but it also puts a big onus on the doctors and the people asking for prior authorizations for the process. The things that are going to streamline it and not cause more delays are the fact that we have it up front. If there is any potential in the first review of the adverse determination or denial, it is on the insurance company to immediately call, within those 7 days, sooner than later, and ask for more documentation and speak to a provider caregiver. They can get immediately enlightened as to the gravity and urgency as well.

That call is just an amazing thing. This is the thing; after that call, if for any reason it is denied, there are the same time frames. It could even be denied as early as two or four days, and then the process is expedited. They do not have to do it in 7 days and most of these companies actually have short timelines throughout the United States, they do get it back a little sooner. I think as we evaluate this through the years, it is not going to even be close to the 7 days. Infrastructure is built, technology is done, and we are going to be getting it back much faster, but we do need to give them time to build that infrastructure.

The important thing is when the doctor is denied, they are going to make sure it is [unintelligible] and the doctor has to make—if it is denied often because they lack documentation or explanation because the doctor did not send it in, we want to treat that half of it as well. If that is treated and the doctors step up and give them better documentation, which will be easily done because now we are asking them to post the criteria for passing and prior authorization denial, both parts have to own up.

Here is the safety valve: when you have subspecialists—which I was quite concerned about, especially our real subspecialist, pediatric gastrologist, all these people—the key thing is, if they have time as an urgency, they do not have to do the 7 days; they can submit the 2-day urgent and always get it turned around in 48 hours. There is an avenue for those things when we need a fast turnaround. That is why we chose to follow, which many across the country do for starters, the Medicare standard because it is already built into the system, and theirs is 7 days.

I was very happy with our stakeholders because really, 7 days, if you think about it, turns out to be pretty close to the 5 days considering when you submit a bill, it is 5 business days, 7 calendar days when you consider weekends, and most go through a weekend. We are very happy about them working with us on those choices.

Chair Marzola:
I am not a doctor, but I think everyone would agree that delayed approval and delayed medical care can cost someone their life, and that is unacceptable.

Assemblymember Anderson:
My question is kind of similar along those same lines. It has to do with section 19, both in the old bill and then in the amendment. Section 19, subsection 2, paragraph (b), and then it is reported again in (c) having to do with the 7 days. Is that calendar days or business days? If I could get that clarification. I am trying to wrap my head around the time frame.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
Yes, echoing what Dr. Jameson said, it is a 7-calendar day.

Chair Marzola:
You may want to amend that to say 7 calendar days.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
Thank you, Chair, for the feedback, we will make sure we repeat the word calendar in there.

Chair Marzola:
Committee members, any additional questions?

Assemblymember Kasama:
This is a fantastic bill; I was working on something like this, too, and it is so critical for our families and loved ones get the care they need and to get this done timely and efficiently.

Chair Marzola:
Committee members, any additional comments or statements? [There were none.] We will begin with testimony in support of A.B. 290. Is there anyone in Carson City wishing to testify in support?

Saharat Buntha, Youth Fellow, One APIA Nevada:
I am here in support of A.B. 290. As a first-generation immigrant from Thailand, I have experienced firsthand the challenges of navigating the health care system here. Currently, I am studying electrical engineering at the University of Nevada, Reno.

I believe A.B. 290 will improve the prior authorization process in Nevada's health care system while allowing Nevadans, including myself, to receive health care without financial worries. Currently, to control treatment costs, many health care providers must obtain prior authorization approval from insurance companies before delivering medical or dental services. This process is quite lengthy, and often Nevadans pay out of pocket because they can no longer wait, or some even abandon the whole process itself.

According to Nevada's Patient Protection Commission, prior authorization forms are very time-consuming and take a lot of time away from patient care, which should be the number one priority. Financial logistics should never delay Nevadans from necessary health treatment or medication. I urge the Committee to pass A.B. 290 to mitigate these issues.

Pauline Ng Lee, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a past president of the Nevada State Medical Association Alliance. I am the spouse of a practicing cardiologist in Clark County, and I am also the sibling of a Clark County physician who renders services in ear, nose, and throat; he is an otolaryngologist. I said it right.

I am testifying in support of A.B. 290 because the bill gives physicians, hospitals, and all medical providers greater guidance and transparency on coverage for medically necessary emergency services.

Health insurance carriers can give prior authorizations and then revoke them, causing our medical providers to have little recourse for payment. And although physicians do not go into this extremely rigorous and stressful profession because of money, they do it to save lives.

Time is not on the side of physicians when they are trying to save lives. This concern is universal; it is bipartisan; actually, it is nonpartisan. The last thing medical providers and hospitals should be worried about in an emergency situation is insurance coverage. It should be about saving lives. Assembly Bill 290 is an excellent bill and addresses the concerns of all parties in an emergency medical situation. Please vote in support of this bill.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else in Carson City wishing to testify in support? [There was no one.] I see people are seated already in Las Vegas. You may begin when you are ready.

Renee Ruiz, Community and Government Relations Organizer, National Nurses Organizing Committee:
We represent the interests of 3,000-plus registered nurses in the state of Nevada. Our membership sees the fallout daily and in real time of delayed care of people seeking health care. Things can go from a minimal drop into the doctor's office to a catastrophe for a family very quickly, especially when care is denied because of a lapse in preauthorization. We are in full support of this bill, and we appreciate Assemblymember Nguyen and all the cosponsors for bringing this forward.

Aida Loudyi, Board-Certified Rheumatologist, Rheumatoid, Inflammatory and Immune Diseases Clinic, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am an independent practitioner. I am here on behalf of my patients and my colleagues. I have seen too much criminal behavior going on with total impunity. I will begin with my specialty. I do appreciate that everybody can appreciate the impact on patients. I can also explain the impact on doctors; we already know about the burnout and the shortage, and this will only help a little bit, making the situation less impossible. It is almost impossible nowadays to practice medicine.

I will make it simple. In my specialty, for example, there are only four drugs that I can prescribe, and the patient can go straight to the pharmacy and pick them up without a prior authorization, and mind you, they are still not cheap. Two of those drugs I cannot prescribe half of the time because half the population has a fatty liver now. Everything else needs a prior authorization because they are like chemo drugs. They are expensive; it is $8,000 a pop. Some infusions that are two weeks, like one for gout, are like $25,000 every two weeks.

Going back to one of the Assemblymembers—and I am sorry, I am still new to this; I do not remember everyone's name—but he mentioned the use of artificial intelligence (AI). I see the use of AI in the most nefarious ways every day. It is an automatic denial even though I make sure, and the lady who does the prior authorizations for me, we have the process down, we have been doing—

Chair Marzola:
Ma'am, can you please wrap up your testimony? Your time is up.

Aida Loudyi:
Which increases the cost. Do you want me to wrap up?

Chair Marzola:
Yes, you can go ahead and submit your full testimony in writing to the Committee secretary, and we will make sure that it is uploaded on NELIS.

Al Rojas, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I strongly want to ditto the testimony of the young man who was studying electrical engineering. It is so funny; I am a retired electronics engineer, and I had a similar experience to him, that you finally gave up and you had to pay for the medical procedure yourself because your insurance took so long. I ended up losing a tooth that was cracked. It was hard to diagnose; for those who are diagnosing a cracked tooth, it is very tricky. I finally had to get the right person to treat it. It just took forever to get an appointment with this guy, and when I finally got it, he could not work on the tooth, and he had to extract it. It was just a disaster. I can only imagine somebody with a heart condition or anything else. I strongly support this bill, and I really want to congratulate the testimony of the young man who is studying electronics engineering.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else in Las Vegas wishing to testify in support? [There was no one.] Is there anyone on the line?

Phan Nguyen, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a practicing dentist of 22 years. Every day in private practice I take in an emergency patient who has severe pain and infections and needs immediate treatment. Frequently, these patients have insurance policies that prohibit same-day treatment and require a preauthorization with their insurance company. Oftentimes patients are unable to take risks because their dental insurance does not pay for their treatment. This results in having to delay the treatment, like extractions, root canals, or incision and drainage, to relieve the swelling and pain.

As a clinician, I take pride in being thorough and honest with my treatment. I make sure my staff takes all necessary diagnostic X-rays, pictures, and thorough documentation to provide proof of medical necessity. Even with that, patients will delay treatment due to insurance coverage because they cannot afford to pay out of pocket and will ask my staff to submit the preauthorization.

When patients' care is deferred, the patients' infection will often grow. This will result in the patient having to go to the emergency room (ER), resulting in loss of time from work, worsening of patients' general health, and increased cost from being at the ER. Insurance companies should not be barriers to patients' access to emergency dental care. Insurance companies must be prohibited from denying coverage of emergency dental care treatments; as such, I fully support A.B. 290 and I urge the Committee to do the same. Thank you, Assemblymember Nguyen, for placing quality patient care as your priority.

[Letters in support, Exhibit O and Exhibit P, were submitted but not discussed and will become part of the record.]

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else on the line? [There was no one.] We will move to testimony in opposition to A.B. 290. Is there anyone here in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the line wishing to testify in opposition? [There was no one.] We will move to testimony in neutral. Is there anyone in Carson City wishing to testify in neutral?

Shelly Capurro, representing Nevada Association of Health Plans:
The Nevada Association of Health Plans is a 10-member organization and they operate in both the commercial and public markets, and we are happy to be here in neutral on A.B. 290 as amended.

We appreciate the collaborative process that was undertaken on this bill and the many discussions that occurred among the stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive solution to this topic. We know this is not an easy undertaking because health care is personal, but we believe the amendment represents a balanced approach that ensures public safety. It maintains health care efficacy and it implements reasonable guidelines.

Paul Young, representing Pharmaceutical Care Management Association:
I would like to echo Ms. Capurro's statements and just would like to acknowledge Assemblymember Nguyen, Assemblymember Yurek, Assemblymember Edgeworth, and Dr. Jameson for these extensive meetings that we had on A.B. 290 to get to where we have gotten.

Adam Plain, Insurance Regulation Liaison, Division of Insurance, Department of Business and Industry:
I did submit some written testimony [Exhibit Q]. I want to touch on that real quick. Title 57 of the *Nevada Revised Statutes*, the Nevada Insurance Code, is very complex. There are lots of definitions and there are some suggestions on maybe ways to tighten up the usage of definitions within the bill.

Additionally, we have identified a theoretical scenario where the provisions around insurers honoring prior authorization from other insurers might be abused, bringing that to everyone's attention so that can be addressed if deemed necessary. I did want to mention on that line as well, it looks like based on the definitions and verbiage used, I wanted to point out that a private or a commercial carrier insurer would be required to honor the prior authorization from Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) plans, but because the State does not have jurisdiction over ERISA plans that would not be reciprocal; just bringing that out for the record.

The Division does have a fiscal note on this bill, relatively minor compared to the Division of Health Care Financing and Policy related to the reporting requirements. We are still looking at the amendment to see if that can be changed at all. With the amendment, I did want to point out that the Division of Insurance here in Nevada was one of the first state agencies to adopt the National Association of Insurance Commissioners' Model Bulletin on the use of Artificial Intelligence Systems by Insurers. Looking at the language pertaining to AI, it appears to be in line with what the Division currently has as artificial intelligence standards.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else wishing to testify in neutral? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to testify in neutral on A.B. 290 in Las Vegas? [There was no one.] Is there anyone on the line? [There was no one.]

Assemblymember Yurek:
I just want to close and say it has been an honor to be a part of this legislative process, meeting with the stakeholders and working to establish some legislation that we think is going to really find the balance we need to address in this space. Just a commitment, and I know I speak for Assemblymember Nguyen, at the same time, the issues that were raised by Mr. Plain, we absolutely will work to refine any definitional challenges or what we need to do, the minor tweaks, to make sure this works for everybody, including them.

Florence Jameson:
I also want to thank all of you, especially because we are creating more work for you going in the future. I think this is a wonderful place to leap off from. It is beautiful; it has a lot of things that we brought all the stakeholders together on, and it is going to create more work for you. But I do not apologize, because I have found out you guys are so busy, it is unbelievable; I cannot even comprehend it. I thought as an OB-GYN I was busy, but you guys are busier. I get to do mine all year; you guys are compressed.

I am really looking forward, and I think it is going to tweak this bill and shape it for the years to come with the last part where the Insurance Commissioner will be reported. You will get reports, you will, at interim, be able to analyze all this data, and you will be able to take care of these drugs that are needlessly authorized. You will be able, in the future, to really continue carrying on what we started with A.B. 290. I thank you and I am sorry about the extra work, but I am so happy about it.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
This process has been amazing, I have learned a lot. I learned so much that my parents said, Why do you not go to school and be a doctor? I said, No, with all this knowledge, I think I am good. I know there are folks out there who need our help, and I appreciate all of your support on this, and we are still looking for more sponsors. If anyone else would like to jump on, we would love to have you.

Chair Marzola:
I will now close the hearing on A.B. 290. I will now open the hearing on Assembly Bill 225, which revises provisions relating to licensing of certain professions and occupations. Assemblymember, you may begin when ready.

Assembly Bill 225: Revises provisions relating to licensing of certain professions and occupations. (BDR 54-858)

Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Assembly District No. 8:
I know this is a long hearing, and I want to make sure I do not contribute to that. Assembly Bill 225 is a transformative piece of legislation that seeks to revolutionize our cosmetology and barbering industries here in Nevada for the better. Assembly Bill 225 aims to modernize Nevada's cosmetology and barber industry by eliminating unnecessary barriers that have been burdening aspiring professionals, promoting comprehensive training, and encouraging business innovation.

Cosmetology and barbering are vital parts of our state's economy. These professions provide essential services to thousands of Nevadans daily. The people who enter these fields should be able to do so without facing unnecessary obstacles.

The Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community, which I have the honor to represent, 30 percent of whom are in Assembly District 8 and the fastest-growing population in Nevada, makes up a large portion of this field. Yet, current licensing requirements often make it more difficult than necessary for those looking to follow their passion and pursue a career in these fields.

Nevada is at the bottom of many lists, but in this case, Nevada is at the top of the list for how hard it is to get a barbering and cosmetology license. Assembly Bill 225 would address these problems head-on by reducing unnecessary barriers while maintaining public safety and consumer protection. I have spent months working on this bill with various stakeholders and constituents. This is still a work in progress, but it is an example of how compromise can happen in our roles.

To help me present A.B. 225 is Jennifer McDonald, assistant director of activism with the Institute for Justice, who helped with A.B. 225 and is here to provide an overview.

Jennifer McDonald, Cities Work Director and Assistant Director of Activism, Institute for Justice:
Thank you for having me here today to talk about A.B. 225 and all of the opportunities that it will provide to many talented professionals in Nevada. As Assemblymember Nguyen said, we are bringing A.B. 225 because Nevada makes it so difficult to become a barber or cosmetologist. Our research at the Institute for Justice shows that it is harder to become a barber in Nevada than in any other state in the country, and there are only five other states in the country that make it more difficult to become a cosmetologist.

What this bill will do is to reduce some of the barriers when entering the beauty and barbering professions, with the goal of making sure individuals have access to these professions. We are not deregulating; we are not getting rid of these licenses. All we are doing is bringing Nevada back in line with national best practices, as well as best practices from the international beauty and barbering industry.

I will go over the bill and the things that it does [Exhibit R]. Assembly Bill 225 would exempt the limited service of blow-dry styling from the state's current 1,000-hour hair designer license. Currently, the requirements are full-service training in cutting and chemicals before a professional can even use a brush and a blow-dryer on a client. The tools used in blow-dry styling, like getting a blowout, or having your hair curled for a special event, are things that we all do in our homes every single day. The equipment is the same, and it is an incredibly safe practice.

By exempting blow-dry styling from the hair designer license, Nevada will come in line with eight other states in the country that are currently doing this. Arizona and Utah are two neighbors of yours that do this, and there are other states across the country that are embracing this newer reform as something that makes sense to let people enter the industry at the ground level.

The bill also makes some small tweaks to the remaining requirements for shampooing, hair braiding, and makeup artistry that are pretty minor, but again, just bring us back into national best practice land.

The bill will also allow unlicensed individuals to cut hair under the direct supervision of licensed barbers and cosmetologists. This already happens in the case of an apprenticeship or while an individual is in beauty or barbering school. This would allow individuals to do that without having to first commit to the thousands of dollars in education and all the hours that it takes to go through an apprenticeship or school.

The idea behind this is that if I were a salon owner, A.B. 225 would allow me to hire somebody at entry level, maybe straight out of high school, to wash hair, to dry hair, and to do those things at my salon without a license. Once I start working with them, I think, Okay, they seem to really have a knack for this; I like them, and I am going to start teaching them how to cut hair. I can teach them how to cut hair under my direct supervision. Once they get used to that, they decide if they have a knack for it and say, I do want to commit to going to barbering or cosmetology school to get my full licensure and become a fully licensed stylist, or they may decide, This is not for me. This way they have learned that without having to commit to all the time and money that it takes to become fully licensed. The idea behind this bill is to increase options for individuals.

Some additional things that the bill does, and I believe we have an amendment on the board. The bill does not touch the full-service licensure hours for cosmetology, which are 1,600, or for the hair designer license, which is 1,000, but it does reduce the hours for barbering from 1,500 to 1,000.

Currently, Nevada requires 1,500 hours of education in a barbering school, then after that is completed, an additional 18 months of an apprenticeship. Only two other states require an apprenticeship after education, requiring both, and Nevada requires a longer time. That is why you guys are ranked number one as the most heavily licensed for barbering.

This bill would reduce those classroom hours for folks who decide to go the classroom route, and it would also allow folks to decide to do their licensure training either in barbering school or as an apprentice. Barbers have been trained through apprenticeships for hundreds of years. This is how it works in the United Kingdom and in several members of the European Union without any issues. That is the model we are trying to bring here as well.

There are a couple of other minor things the bill does in terms of allowing barbers and cosmetologists to work together in the same facility, improving recognition of out-of-state barber licenses, and eliminating the arbitrary good moral character requirements you see in a lot of occupational licenses. Getting rid of some outdated, invasive health testing requirements as well as getting rid of the requirement that in order to do an apprenticeship to become a licensed cosmetologist, you have to live more than 60 miles away from your nearest cosmetology school. So that is an overview. The bill does a lot.

I wanted to touch on a couple of things on the issue of health and safety. Study after study demonstrates that higher licensing requirements do not meaningfully improve the quality of services or health and safety. Our most recent study analyzed thousands of health inspections across four states for barbershops and nail salons, which were not touched on by this bill but they were in our study. The results are very clear: these businesses were clean and safe regardless of whether the state had no licensing, a moderate amount of licensing, or a high amount of licensing, and when I say a high amount of licensing, I mean a lot of hours to get that license. As you can see on the slide [Exhibit R], these salons always pass inspection because they are professionals who know what they are doing regardless of how much time they had to spend to get qualified to do it.

It is important to note that Nevada law requires only 3 percent of the total hours of mandatory training for cosmetologists and hair designers to be dedicated to infection control and prevention. But the *Nevada Administrative Code* (NAC) 644A.630, subsection 1, paragraph (d) allows for up to 5 percent of those hours to be earned through modeling or field trips, which includes coming to the Capital today to talk about this bill. There is more time that is allowed to do that than there is to sanitation and training. The 1,600 or 1,500 hours that required that sanitation, those high amounts of hours do not justify the need for health and safety because so little time is spent on sanitation training.

Lastly, I will leave you with one more study we did that looked at cosmetology schools across the country. We found that in Nevada, cosmetology school costs on average over $20,000, leading students to take on thousands of dollars of debt and on average around $8,000 in federal student loans just to get through cosmetology school [Exhibit R].

Our research also shows that Nevada schools are only graduating 12 percent of students on time. That means 88 percent of Nevada's cosmetology school students are spending more and more time in school, spending more money on school.

I will wrap up quickly; to conclude, this bill is about the options. There is a tremendous amount of economic growth this bill will create by allowing salon owners, beauty and barbering professionals, and other workers to enter the industry and to learn how they learn best. It protects public health and safety and makes sure students are getting the training they need that will best equip them for the industry. We are here standing with countless Nevada cosmetologists and barbers who support this message and understand that it is time for the industry to change. You will hear from several of them later during this hearing. I just wanted to point out, we are very proud of them for bravely standing up. There is a lot of entrenched interest in this issue, so we are really proud of the folks who were able to come here today and come to Las Vegas to tell you their stories. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

[Exhibit S was submitted but not discussed and will become part of the record.]

Assemblymember Nguyen:
Chair, with your permission, I will quickly go over the conceptual amendment [Exhibit T]. Section 1 of the conceptual amendment exempts the practices of blow-dry styling, hair braiding, and shampoo technology from the provision governing massage therapy.

Section 2 requires a licensed barber who supervises an apprentice participating in a federally registered apprenticeship program to train the apprentice in all subjects of practical work and related supplemental instruction for the scope of a license as a barber.

Section 4 exempts a person engaging in certain practices from the application of provisions governing barbers in the practice of barbering. Section 5 allows a person who has completed 1,000 hours of training in a barbering school approved by the State Barbers' Health and Sanitation Board or who has completed 2,000 hours of training, including 144 hours of related supplemental instruction under an agreement with a sponsoring barbershop in a federally registered apprenticeship program, to receive a license as a barber. This section also eliminates the requirement for a person to have a chest X-ray, which would indicate he or she does not have tuberculosis (TB), and a blood test that indicates he or she does not have any communicable diseases.

Section 6 removes certain requirements for a license as an apprentice and exempts a person who is participating in a federally registered apprenticeship program from passing an examination conducted by the Board. Section 7 eliminates the requirement that an applicant for a barber license or apprentice file a physician certification that he or she is free from TB and other communicable diseases.

Section 8 requires a person who has a license or certificate for a scope of practice that is substantially the same as the practice of barbering to be admitted to practice as a licensed barber or apprentice pursuant to regulations adopted by the Board.

Section 10 requires barbershops to provide a written notice to customers before commencing their service or provide a legible sign notifying a customer that he or she is receiving a service from an apprentice who is participating in a federally registered apprenticeship program.

Section 11 provides that a person who holds a license to operate a barbershop is not prohibited from leasing space, employing, or working in the same space as a person who is a licensed cosmetologist. A licensed barber and a licensed cosmetologist are not required to work in different spaces in the barbershop or to have partition between them.

Section 12 requires the Board to issue a license as an instructor under certain circumstances. Section 47 repeals certain provisions relating to the examination for a license as a hairbraider or shampoo technologist, and the registration of makeup artists. Section 20 exempts a person engaged in only practicing shampoo technology, hair braiding, or makeup artistry from obtaining a license from the State Board of Cosmetology.

Sections 7, 18, 21, 34 through 37, 39, 40, and 42 through 47 eliminate references to shampoo technologist, hair braider, and makeup artist and provisions governing the licensure and regulation of persons licensed by the Board.

Sections 22, 24, 26, 27, 29, and 31 revise the requirement to be admitted to a license examination as a cosmetologist, hair designer, advanced aesthetician, nail technologist, or electrologist to allow certain requirements to be fulfilled by completing training in the federally registered apprenticeship program.

I am proposing an amendment to section 22, subsection 4, to retain 1,600 hours of training as a cosmetologist at a Board-approved cosmetology school. That is to further highlight that we are keeping this hour requirement. We are not taking that out; 1,600 hours of training for cosmetology licenses will still be in place within the amendment. The amendment to section 24, subsection 4 is to retain 1,000 hours of training for a hair designer at a Board-approved cosmetology school; those are going back in.

Sections 23, 25, 28, and 30 revise requirements for the issuance of registration certificates as an apprentice for a cosmetologist, hair designer, aesthetician, and a nail technologist respectively, to allow for such certificate to be issued to a person in the federally registered apprentice program.

Section 33 eliminates that a required person, who is licensed in another state, territory, or the District of Columbia, provides satisfactory proof to the State Board of Cosmetology that he or she is of good moral character in order to be granted a license to practice the occupation in which the applicant was previously licensed.

Section 41 revises the provision governing the procedure for the training and practices of apprentices for cosmetologists, aestheticians, electrologists, hair designers, and nail technologists.

Section 42 authorizes an operator of a cosmetology establishment or a person who is licensed under a provision governing cosmetology to work in the same space as a barber and cosmetological establishment. Currently, unless a person is licensed or registered in accordance with provisions covering cosmetology and related practices, it is unlawful for a person to conduct or operate at a cosmetological establishment, school, or any other place of business in which any one or a combination of the occupations are taught or practiced unless the person is licensed to do so. Section 46 specifies this provision does not apply to a person who participates in the federally registered apprenticeship program.

I know there is a lot of language here, it is a lot of things we are trying to work on, and it is still a work in progress. We are continuing stakeholders' meetings. We want to make sure we make this work for everyone and give folks an ability to participate in this industry without sacrificing safety or without sacrificing licensing. I just want to reiterate that point because a lot of the narratives out there are saying this bill is to seek to eliminate licensing or eliminate safety. This is not it. That is why I want to make sure I leave you with that before we stand ready for questions.

[Exhibit U was submitted but not discussed and will become part of the record.]

Chair Marzola:
Committee, we will start with questions.

Assemblymember Roth:
It never surprises me there are always some bills that I get a lot of outreach from my constituents on, and this was one of them. One issue that was raised for me, and I am hoping you can help me understand it a little better. It was brought to my attention that there can be some issues with transferring credits amongst the schools. Barber schools in particular. I am wondering how many schools exist in this state and if there are barriers to becoming a teacher or however they are referred to. Can you speak to that a little bit?

Jennifer McDonald:
We actually have a few practitioners with us who are experts on barber schooling and instructors and things like that. We can have them answer that question if that is okay, with the Chair's permission.

Gabriel Herrera, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
There are four barber schools in Las Vegas alone. As far as transferring credits between the schools, I am not very familiar with it. I think somebody could speak better to the cosmetology portion of that. I think that was a bigger problem between schools. As far as the barbering schools, there are four, and that is the part I can answer.

Assemblymember Roth:
It was brought to my attention by a constituent that there can be issues with somebody attending one barber school and moving, maybe across the state. I am from the north, for example, and want to attend another barber school, but their credits or the hours do not transfer to the new barber school, so they have to start over. I am wondering, does this bill address that at all, or is that a barrier that we are seeing for students across the state?

Jennifer McDonald:
This bill does not address that specific problem, and we have heard of that problem. The schools, as far as I understand, are permitted to decide to accept or not accept the hours from another school, a competitor school, whether they want to or not. This bill does not address that issue.

Assemblymember Monroe-Moreno:
The phone-a-friend at the table stated how many barber schools there are down south. I have two questions: one, are there any barber schools here in northern Nevada?

Gabriel Herrera:
Forgive me, I am not very familiar with the north. I own barbershops in Las Vegas.

Assemblymember Monroe-Moreno:
Is there a standardized training for barber schools? No matter where you are attending throughout the state, you must be taught the same thing? And are there waiting lists, or are there still open seats for the barber schools? On top of that, how many classes are offered per year?

Gabriel Herrera:
There are waiting lists depending on the barber school you want to go to. As far as I know, there is one test, both practical and written, for all students who attend whichever barber school, but it is one standardized test. I assume all of the curriculums have to meet the same standard.

Jennifer McDonald:
The number of hours that are required for the curricula are in the *Nevada Administrative Code* (NAC) Chapter 644A.

Assemblymember Torres-Fossett:
I have a couple of questions; I know that this would allow for currently licensed barbers to provide instruction to individuals who have no training. They might not have any type of sanitation training, which I think is extremely important in cosmetology services. What are the requirements for those individuals? Where in this bill does it outline what that requirement is? I do not think just having a license should allow for someone to instruct somebody on how to do this type of work.

Jennifer McDonald:
This would work similarly to how the restaurant industry is regulated. The establishment itself is required to maintain health and safety standards. The individual servers have their own health and safety training. We trust the experts in the field are going to train the folks that work for them. In the salon context, if I hire somebody to come in and work in my shop, first, basic sanitation is very basic to understand, and as a business owner, from what we hear from practitioners, they teach the people who work in their salons and their barbershops very explicitly how to maintain that sanitation training.

Assemblymember Torres-Fossett:
That is definitely a point of contention I am not going to be comfortable with. I also would like to understand what the point is, as somebody who gets some of these services. I might go to a salon and get my hair washed or I might get my makeup done for an event. What is the reasoning for getting eliminated? I know you stated, Assemblymember, that this bill does not eliminate any licenses, but it does currently as we eliminate multiple sections, and then also with those sanitation requirements. I am just trying to understand what the purpose of eliminating those current license programs is, because I do think there are a lot of reasons why people should go get a license and get some of these examinations before they are providing these essential services.

My question is: what is the rationale behind eliminating these existing licensing programs? I believe there are valid reasons why individuals should be required to obtain a license and successfully complete examinations before providing these kinds of essential services. These requirements help ensure public health, safety, and professional accountability. I would appreciate further clarification on the intended purpose and impact of these changes.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
I just want to make sure that—and I apologize for—I misspoke earlier on the removing licenses on the major programs, which are the cosmetology and barbering programs. The licensing requirement is still there. There are sections of the bill we are seeking to remove licensing requirements from hair braiders, shampoo technologists, and makeup artists. At this point, two out of three of those requirements have a similar licensing process. For example, they must take classes and instruction, then take a test, and they would receive a certificate of registration. It is a similar licensing requirement, so they are being put in the same category.

We are seeking to remove those categories in terms of licensing or certificate of registration. I should be clearer on that one—the hair braiders, the shampoo technologists, and the makeup artists will be exempt from licensing requirements in terms of this particular bill.

Assemblymember Torres-Fossett:
Would we be able to get clarification on that, Chair? As I read this bill, it completely eliminates those sections of the NRS [*Nevada Revised Statutes*] on page 34 of this bill. It appears we are eliminating makeup artists, shampoo techs, and hair braiding from licensure here in the state.

Chair Marzola:
Are you looking at the bill itself or the amendment?

Assemblymember Torres-Fossett:
It is in both, Chair; page 34 of the original bill as well as the last page of the amendment; they are not numbered.

Jennifer McDonald:
Currently, to shampoo in Nevada, you have to have a shampoo license, and that requires 50 hours of training; we would eliminate that license for shampooing. To conduct natural hair braiding in Nevada, you have to take an exam to work legally, and we would eliminate that exam. They are not actually licensed hair braiders. Thirty-six states and Washington, D.C., fully exempt natural hair braiding from licensure. Makeup artists as well, do not need a license in Nevada, but they do have to register with the state. We would eliminate the registration requirement as well. There are 17 states right now that fully exempt makeup artists from licensure registration.

Chair Marzola:
Committee members, are there any additional questions?

Assemblymember Miller:
I want to go back to the comments in the presentation that were made about the graduation rates. First, I want to remind everyone that I have brought two pieces of legislation to this body about Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applications. Students should be filling out FAFSA applications because, obviously, all this training would apply.

When it comes to the number of graduates, there was a comment made about how long it takes. It is my understanding that for this type of training at these schools, it is up to the student to go part-time or full-time and how many hours they complete on their journey. But with that, can someone answer how many students are graduating now, what the average length of time it takes, and how this bill, as amended, would address that? Should we expect to see increased graduation rates and increased school completion time? If you could tell us the impact that would come from that.

Jennifer McDonald:
Assemblymember, I think a 12 percent on-time graduation statistic shows us that right now schools are not adequately serving our students. We hear from cosmetology and barbering professionals that they do not learn what they need to learn in school. They learn from other students, they learn from YouTube, and they learn on the job. The idea behind the bill is to give students an opportunity to learn on the job through an apprenticeship if they do not learn as well in school. This provides flexibility so they can enter the industry in a way it makes sense for them financially, in a way it makes sense for them supporting their families, and how they learn, that sort of thing. Does that answer your question a bit?

Assemblymember Miller:
Not necessarily. Specifically, if you could answer how many are graduating now, what the rates are, and the average completion time, and then how this bill would impact and increase the number of graduates we have and decrease the length of time it takes to complete.

I just had a follow-up, Chair, because of something you said about learning from others, which is literally in every profession. I also know many of our beauty colleges and such offer—because people need hours, they need additional practice—they offer the public to come in and have students work on them, performing different services. I was wondering, are those hours they are working on the public not counted or considered as on-the-job training? Because legally, they are supposed to be under the supervision of an instructor.

Jennifer McDonald:
I would have to look at our research to get you that exact number for how many are graduating and the amount of time. I can get back to you on that.

This bill is not intended to address that graduation rate on time; we just mentioned that to show that obviously something is not working and that is an indication for change. I will let our friend, James, talk about the specifics on hours for cosmetology school.

James Anthony, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am not sure I understood the question thoroughly. I know there was a transferable hour question I could have answered, but I am not sure on this one.

Assemblymember Miller:
The question was, will this bill assist in increasing the number of graduates and also reduce the amount of time it takes them to complete school?

James Anthony:
I would say for me, this is a specialized thing. Utah just passed a haircutting bill that is only 150 hours for haircutting. It is not deregulating the market; it is more opening it up and expanding it for these little things. There are salons that have coloring only, and there are salons that have haircutting only, there are specializations with every student.

We do not need an overall regulation or even accumulation for cosmetology, in my opinion, because some hairstylists do not want to learn nails, and some makeup artists do not want to learn hair. That to me is the big perspective. I do not know if that answers your question.

Gabriel Herrera:
I want to interject a little bit from what I have learned on the barber side of things. The reason why I am in support of this bill is because it provides different paths to get to a licensure, right? And you can choose the path.

Currently there is one way, and it does not matter where you are in life; if you already have responsibilities and you want to enter this field, going to full-time employment and paying

for full-time school is a very difficult choice for many people, which is why I think they fall out and do not complete their training.

The apprentice option allows those to learn and earn at the same time, and it is pretty heavy with 2,000 hours of apprenticeship that get added to this with an additional 144 hours of supplemental training, which can handle your health and sanitation portion. Because, of course, as a business owner I am very concerned about that because I have to pay insurance. I must say I believe your graduation rates would improve because those who choose that path, it is a choice to go the school route versus going the apprentice route. Those who want to get out there and earn on the way have the option to do so, and it might take a while.

Chair Marzola:
Committee members, any additional questions? I have a couple. Just so I understand correctly, if I wanted to be a barber, I can either go to school or I can be an apprentice, correct?

Gabriel Herrera:
Currently, no. Currently you must finish barber school, then become an apprentice.

Chair Marzola:
I meant this bill. If this legislation were passed, I could either go to school or be an apprentice.

Gabriel Herrera:
Absolutely, yes.

Chair Marzola:
This is a concern that I have. School teaches you the fundamentals, correct? You may be a great teacher at your shop, but at the one next door or somewhere else, that may not be the case, and someone may not be taught the correct way. To me, it puts the public at harm; that is my first concern. Also, someone said earlier that becoming a barber is very difficult here. Is it the schooling, is it the apprenticeship after the schooling, or is it the testing after, is the Board taking a long time to process these applications? Can you talk to me about that?

Jennifer McDonald:
Our study at the Institute for Justice, called License to Work, looks at 102 lower-income occupations across the country and we analyze them in a way that allows us to compare them and rank where states stand and where the occupations stand. Nevada ranks as the most burdensome state for barbering because of those 1,500 hours of school and then the additional 18 months of apprenticeship that translate to about 896 days lost to education and the training requirement. That is the big one, but there are two other states that do require the education plus apprenticeship. They rank lower than Nevada because they have fewer exams. Nevada requires four different exams to become a barber.

Nevada also requires you to be 18 years of age to become a barber, and some other states allow you to become a barber at 16 or 17. That is where that kind of ranking comes between one and two, but it is mostly the time combined of the school and the apprenticeship that contributes to that ranking.

Chair Marzola:
Thank you for that answer. So, would not one of the solutions be to reduce the number of hours for the apprenticeship rather than eliminate the schooling totally?

Jennifer McDonald:
That could be an option, Madam Chair, but the problem is that it is difficult for certain individuals to get to a barber school, particularly if they live in a rural area where there is no barber school. Barber school can be very expensive, and they cannot earn money while they are learning in barber school. Barbering has been taught through apprenticeship for hundreds of years, both in this country and abroad. That seems to have worked and we are trying to take that best practice to understand that school does not necessarily work for everybody.

Chair Marzola:
How many other states have passed legislation where someone can choose either school or an apprenticeship?

Jennifer McDonald:
I would have to get the exact number for you, but I just looked at this list the other day. There are only three that I mentioned that require both. There are, I would guess, a handful that require only education, and the majority of states allow either education or apprenticeship to get a barber license.

Chair Marzola:
If you can give the Committee manager that list, please do so I can provide it to the Committee. I believe those are all my questions.

Gabriel Herrera:
If I could provide some additional clarity on the health and sanitation portion and being able to educate apprentices in the individual shops.

Currently, any shop or barbershop must be inspected, and any barbershop owner must designate a registered barber responsible for the shop. It makes it clear that when you do this registration, they understand all laws and provisions and will maintain them. At any time, an inspector can come through unscheduled, and do an inspection of your shop, and they must uphold those standards. Anybody who is designated must be a registered barber and must make sure everybody is adhering to all applicable laws because it does result in a fine if somebody does not. It is in any owner's or manager's best interest to make sure all those standards are maintained in the shop and every rule and regulation is followed in the shop, if that helps.

Assemblymember Monroe-Moreno:
You have talked about the fee to the barber school and instead of training under a licensed professional, is there anything in the bill that would prevent the licensed professional from charging a fee to the apprentice for their services?

Jennifer McDonald:
There is nothing in the bill that talks about that specifically. I do not know if any of you happen to know if that is something already in NAC Chapter 644A, or not. But we do not touch on it in the bill.

Chair Marzola:
Committee members, are there any additional questions? [There were none.] We will move to testimony in support. Is there anyone here in Carson City wishing to testify in support of A.B. 225? You may begin when you are ready.

Gabriel Herrera:
[Read from written testimony, Exhibit V.] I am asking for your support of A.B. 225. I am grateful to have the opportunity today to share how the current barber laws and regulations impact those I am responsible for, those I personally have encountered, and myself both professionally and personally.

My wife and I own and operate two franchise barbershops in Las Vegas. My daughter is a registered barber and a licensed cosmetologist whose journey we personally witnessed because we, thank God, had the means to pay for it. After $17,000 and 11 months of school and working for 18 months, she learned that her passion was cutting men's hair. She asked us to help her pursue barbering because for cosmetologists to cross over and attend barber school, it costs $5,000 and 10 weeks full-time. She had to sacrifice her full-time income in the salon. Luckily for her, my wife and I have always supported and encouraged our children to pursue their passion.

I have encountered cosmetologists who have been cutting men's hair professionally for 20 years that I cannot hire. Not many folks are in a position to give up or severely impact their financial situation for almost three months. I have met several licensed barbers making a living out of state, and I have begrudgingly turned them away because they have been barbering for less than five years. Some of those are told they have to go back to barber school to make up for the hours their state did not require.

I myself have foregone the notion of pursuing a barber license due to the current requirements. Having several years in the Marine Corps cutting hair for myself, my friends, my three sons, and nephews, I considered it a passion worth pursuing as a second career after retiring from a rewarding data center career.

Chair Marzola:
Mr. Herrera, if you can please wrap up your testimony, your two minutes are up.

Savannah Harmon, Owner, Salon Kvltvre and Suites, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I have nearly two decades of experience as a cosmetologist in hair care and mentorship within my industry. I am here today in support of A.B. 225.

As a salon owner, I am experiencing firsthand the ramifications of our state's burdensome restrictions on apprenticeship opportunities in the beauty and barber industry. Specifically, the 60-mile rule prohibits salons like mine at the epicenter of Vegas from being considered as an educational resource from the onset. My salon has the capacity to employ 25 to 50 full-time and part-time individuals.

Since opening my business, I have struggled to meet the demand due to the lack of qualified professionals who meet basic salon requirements and can keep up with the fast pace of the business. My salon serves a diverse client base, mostly a marginalized segment of the population that is characterized by curly, kinky, and coily textured hair and who patronize businesses like mine consistently.

Curriculum in the beauty schools fail to include all textures of hair, so students are not proficient in serving the demand of this population. In turn, my business continues to incur increased costs for additional training and prolonged training exceeding the 100 hours per year that our industry estimates should take for a license holder.

Often, we owners are working from deficit of a training debt after we have invested time and money into these professionals who are also burdened by their own school debt. They, too, have invested in their education and are not equipped to earn the revenue intended had they been able to have real-world experiences on the job from the beginning. Saying yes to A.B. 225 is saying yes to providing our industry with an opportunity to have a stable workforce that will aid future beauty and barber professionals and long-term career opportunities that will benefit us economically and equitably. Yes, to bridge the gap between school and real-world on-the-job experiences. Yes, to improving completion rates and lowering job turnovers. Yes, to being able to work and earn in their trained field, and yes to affording opportunities to disproportionate groups.

Chair Marzola:
If I can get you to wrap up your testimony.

Wingki Lui, Youth Fellow, One APIA Nevada:
I am a youth fellow at One APIA Nevada, where we advocate for the interests of all Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. We strongly support A.B. 225. By allowing individuals to obtain licenses through alternative training pathways, we can enable those with sufficient hands-on experience to enter the profession without facing unnecessary barriers. This approach is especially important for individuals who may not be able to afford traditional schooling but have developed their skills through real-world experiences. We hope you will support A.B. 225, as it will promote fairness and enable individuals to pursue careers in their respective fields.

James Anthony:
To preface the next two minutes, I would like to say this bill is not about how current cosmetology schools and salons operate; it is about the future and the potential of specialized boutiques and small-business creation built by students who may just be coming out of school. It is about healthy competition and healthy economics, school or apprenticeship.

Additionally, services like blow-dry styling, makeup application, shampooing, and natural hair braiding do not require cutting or chemicals and present minimal risks. Licensing does not equate to safety or fair labor. Purchasing a shampoo basin, nail technician tools, perm supplies for new students wanting to open up a boutique eyelash bar or blow-dry bar, or a wig-install salon, is an unnecessary burden. These are the requirements of the State Board of Cosmetology of Nevada to do business. Minimally trained students perform unpaid services on paying customers in school while unlicensed, allowing schools to profit twice.

For licensed professionals like myself, these reforms are about more than just numbers. They are about the right to work and fair competition. Salon to salon, each has its own probationary period. Some spend up to two years training and guiding their new hires in the craft before they can even build a clientele after licensure. It is the Board's responsibility to interact with the public, and it is not within the Cosmetology Board's jurisdiction to investigate complaints based on either quality or design of a service or the technical competency of the individual.

All present opposition in favor of criminalizing students and potential future leaders in the industry greatly limits specialization in many already large markets. It also allows for cosmetology schools to monopolize emerging markets in real time, as it has with barbering. In truly free markets, every school or salon owner has a choice to train an apprentice at will, not forced. Every one of us has suffered from the cost of compliance in these past years. Now we have the opportunity to enhance Nevada's economic growth and competitiveness.

In conclusion, I urge the Committee to support Assemblymember Nguyen's proposed reforms with Lieutenant Governor Anthony's backing. [Exhibit W was submitted and made part of the record.]

Patrinna Murrell, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am also known as Ms. Cherry, and I am a salon and barbershop owner, a prior instructor, and cosmetologist in Las Vegas.

Twenty-nine years ago, I opened up the first Black, Native American, and female-owned barbershop. In fact, two barbers have also established barber schools here in the state of Nevada that came from my barber salon. At my salon, House of Extensions, we provide a variety of services and training opportunities. It is very important to me that I can train aspiring stylists in my own salon and provide them with a modern experience they need to get started.

Currently, anyone who wants to be a hairstylist or a braider has to attend traditional cosmetology school. Stylists also have to spend hours learning about services they have no interest in performing, especially if they only want to be safe services like blow-drying, styling, braiding, and shampooing. At my salon I will train my stylists, giving them experience in a salon from Day One rather than having to spend months in the classroom. I know that with my teaching, individuals in my salon are ready to start contributing and they should not need government permission to provide these services. Under my supervision they can learn how to cut and style hair before deciding to go through with the time and expense of training.

If I have been cutting hair for almost three decades, I feel confident that I can oversee people in my own salon. It is important to establish stylists like me to be able to oversee aspiring stylists and manage our own apprenticeship program. In 39 years, not to take away from any schools, in fact I have served and I have instructed instructors how to teach students so students would not have to teach each other. This program, like mine, can provide an alternative to transitional—

Chair Marzola:
Can you please wrap up your testimony. Your time is up.

Patrinna Murrell:
I hope you will support this reform.

Cesar Minera, Grassroots Engagement Director, Libre Initiative:
We are one of the largest Latino organizations dedicated to empowering the Hispanic community in Nevada and across the nation.

On behalf of the Libre Initiative, I am here to express our strong support for A.B. 225. Assembly Bill 225 represents a meaningful step toward removing unnecessary barriers to opportunity in Nevada. For far too long, licensing requirements in the beauty industry have created obstacles that disproportionately impact hardworking individuals from immigrant and minority communities, especially Latinos who are eager to pursue a better life through skilled trades. In many Latino households, barbering, braiding, and cosmetology are more than just careers. They are generational callings and vital sources of income.

However, the current regulatory structure often requires hundreds of hours of schooling and costly licensing procedures that do not always reflect the real-world skills that these professionals already possess. These barriers can delay or even block entry into the industry, preventing individuals from supporting their families and growing their own businesses. Assembly Bill 225 helps change that by streamlining requirements and recognizing traditional and cultural methods of practice.

This bill will open doors for thousands of Nevadans who are ready to work, serve their communities, and contribute to our state's economy. This legislation brings us closer to the promise of the American dream, where hard work, talent, and dedication are rewarded, not regulated out of reach.

For many Latino entrepreneurs, A.B. 225 would make it possible to turn a passion into a profession, to open a shop, hire others, and build a future here in Nevada. I urge the Committee to support A.B. 225 and help ensure that Nevada is a state where opportunity is accessible to all regardless of background.

Pauline Ng Lee, Board Member, Keystone Corporation:
We are a nonpartisan, pro-business advocacy group. Two of the key missions of Keystone Corporation are to advocate for private sector job creation and responsible regulation. Those two things create opportunity—opportunity for small businesses. After all, small businesses are the lifeblood and engine of any economy. An opportunity for people to find gainful, productive employment, which reduces poverty and reduces the need for welfare programs.

Government regulation should be minimal to enable our citizens to work for a living, reduce the likelihood of poverty, and diversify our economy. To that end, I request that this body approve A.B. 225, as the provisions have sufficient safeguards and transparency to allow these workers to gain employment and for them to make a living for themselves and their families.

This bill requires transparency to the consumers, which is extremely important and we have not seen in other bills as well. This disclosure is important to the consumers so they understand that the person who is giving them services is an apprentice. This disclosure is in writing, and there will be appropriate signage. Accordingly, I support A.B. 225 and I hope that you will too.

Maurice Washington, Community Engagement Director, Americans for Prosperity:
I am here on behalf of Americans for Prosperity as a legislative liaison. I wanted to talk particularly about the bill as it provides alternative pathways, some exemptions for specialties, and the maintenance of public safety and consumer satisfaction. One of your members asked the question in regard to northern Nevada. I have lived in northern Nevada for some time and have been around this industry for some time as well. Of course, my current condition will not lend itself to my statement, but I have worked with some of these young barbers, cosmetologists, and beauticians. I can tell you this: the transfer of credits or transfer of hours and credits was a good question. I think it is one that should be considered and looked at, and we would like to work with the author and the sponsor of the bill to kind of see that transfer is amenable.

To answer the question as far as barbershop schools that are in northern Nevada, there is one currently. Prior to the one established, there was none. So, in order to obtain your licensure, you had to travel to Sacramento, go to school, come back, and then try to obtain your hours to obtain your license in northern Nevada.

This bill will lend itself to helping alternative pathways, especially for those in northern Nevada, as the industry continues to change and as northern Nevada continues to grow. The requirements of these services are looked for and necessary for certain employment opportunities as well as those who seek a profession in this industry sector. I would ask that if we have the opportunity, to work with the sponsor if he so desires to amend this bill for its passage, to work with them, and to answer some of the questions that have been presented here this afternoon.

Chair Marzola:
This will be the last testimony we will take here in Carson City before going to Las Vegas. You may begin when you are ready.

Joe Hill, Policy Analyst, Retail Association of Nevada:
We support A.B. 225, as it modernizes Nevada's licensing framework for barbers, cosmetologists, massage therapists, and similar occupations, removing unnecessary barriers and allowing quicker entry into the workforce by simplifying apprenticeship programs. This bill promotes job growth and effective training.

With over 60 percent of these Nevada students needing federal loans, this bill also opens doors for those who would otherwise face barriers to entering these meaningful careers. In 2020, Nevada employed approximately 4,800 hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists, and this number is projected to grow by 27 percent by 2030. Assembly Bill 225 is crucial because it ensures our licensing system is prepared to support this growing workforce, helping businesses fill jobs more efficiently and allowing workers to access meaningful careers without unnecessary hurdles. We urge your support for A.B. 225.

Chair Marzola:
We will now begin testimony in support in Las Vegas. You may begin when you are ready.

Angel Wei, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I work as a shampoo technician at a local Asian-owned hair salon here in Las Vegas. I am here today to express my strong support for A.B. 225 from both a personal and community perspective.

First, I want to thank Assemblymember Nguyen for introducing this bill. My first job was as an assistant at a friend's salon. I learned to shampoo and blow-dry hair, and it gave me a way to earn income while getting experience in the beauty industry. Under the current law, even doing basic tasks like blow-drying or shampooing without a full license is not allowed. That makes it really difficult for people starting out.

Assembly Bill 225 would give people like me, especially new immigrants, and young workers an easier and more affordable entry into the field. It would make it possible to begin as a blow-dry assistant, gain real-life experience, and start earning money while deciding whether to pursue the full license later. That is how many of us find our passion in this profession.

In many Asian salons, assistants play a huge role in daily operations. We greet clients, wash hair, and help stylists prepare; it is teamwork. This bill would recognize the important role we already play and make it possible for us to work legally and safely. I believe A.B. 225 can help more people support their families, build job skills, and be part of an industry they are passionate about.

Rou Lee, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I work as a shampoo technician at a family-owned Asian hair salon in Las Vegas. I am here today to share my support for A.B. 225 from a personal and professional standpoint.

I want to thank Assemblymember Nguyen for bringing forward this bill. As someone who has come to this country with a strong work ethic, I started as an assistant at my friend's salon blow-drying and shampooing, where I learned and helped me earn money while continuing my training. Under the current license system, it is hard to legally have assistants help with things like shampooing or blow-drying without going through 1,000 hours of formal training first.

Assembly Bill 225 will allow many of us, especially in the Asian community, to have more accessibility into the beauty industry. For new immigrants and younger workers who want to support their family and have a career in cosmetology, being able to start as a blow-dry assistant is a real opportunity; it builds confidence, income, and experience without [unintelligible].

In many Asian salons, the assistants are in the business to help with customer service, pre-work, and keeping things running smoothly. This bill will help families recognize the work we already do and make it legal. Assembly Bill 225 will open the door for more hard-working people like me to join the industry, support their family, and grow their career.

Laura Nowlan, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a small-business owner in the Las Vegas, Nevada, area. I have been in the staffing industry for the last 18 years really trying to help improve our workforce. I work with a lot of interns, and A.B. 225 really does help allow the individual to really get to determine if they even want to go into becoming a barber or taking these classes.

It really would help our low-income communities, especially the east and the north sides of Las Vegas. If A.B. 225 will pass with these stipulations, it will allow the student to really determine if this is a career pathway they are wanting to enter. Thank you for your time, and I really do hope that you support A.B. 225 in order to help the small-business community continue improving its workforce.

Christian Cardenas, Director, Grassroots Operations, Americans for Prosperity:
On behalf of Americans for Prosperity (AFP) Nevada, I want to thank you and the sponsor of this bill for the opportunity to testify in favor of A.B. 225, a bill that would make several changes to massage therapy, barbering, and cosmetology-related government occupational licenses.

As AFP Nevada works to remove onerous and unnecessary occupational barriers in our great state, AFP supports A.B. 225, which would, among other things, remove government licensing requirements for blow-drying, styling, hair braiding, shampoo technology, and makeup artistry practices and allow the use of federally registered apprenticeship programs as valid training for related professions, also removing examination requirements upon completion.

This would permit barbershops to lease space to cosmetologists without necessitating the separate work area and establishes the licensed cosmetologists, aestheticians, electrologists, hair designers, and nail technologists are not required to obtain additional instructor licenses to train apprentices.

Today, licensing burdens actually reduce the opportunities for Nevadans while cutting off rungs on the economic mobility ladder for people trying to improve their lives. In fact, research actually shows in these more heavily licensed states, entrepreneurship rates among low-income residents are actually much lower. Recidivism rates are actually higher for ex-offenders, and other unintended consequences such as increased crime rates occurred due to decreased employment opportunities. While AFP works with leaders to continue reducing employment barriers, A.B. 225 helps to remove a range of anticompetitive, needlessly burdensome, and ineffective licensure requirements in the massage therapy, barbering, and cosmetology spaces. With that being said, we ask that you please support A.B. 225.

Anahit Baghshetsyan, Research Assistant, Nevada Policy:
Nevada Policy comes today in strong support of A.B. 225. I think before me, we heard amazing anecdotes and personal stories of why we should support the bill. I will try to center my testimony on a little bit more of a statewide context and a nationwide context.

As we heard from Ms. McDonald, Nevada has some of the heaviest occupational licensing requirements in the nation. The Silver State requires licensure for 74 percent of all 102 low-income occupations, when the national average for licensure requirements is only 53 percent.

On top of that, not only are many professions regulated, but the professions that are already regulated have inflated costs, both when it comes to monetary and time contributions. The average licensure fee in Nevada for a profession is $747 when the national average is only $284. I think this paints a great picture that not only do our barbers, cosmetologists, and beauty professionals have to invest more time than other states, they also have to invest more money. Our research from last year demonstrated that more monetary investment does not even translate into more average income, with the average salary of cosmetologists in Nevada being $26,000 whereas the national average is $34,000.

Changing all these hurdles and lessening the barriers to enter the market would expand career opportunities for Nevadans and encourage more individuals to enter the workforce and participate in labor. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to support the bill.

Wiz Rouzard, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
Today, as a Nevadan, as a father, and as a proud son of parents who emigrated to this beautiful country from a beautiful country, as well, called Haiti. The reason I bring Haiti up is because I got the privilege to travel on many occasions with my mother. It just so happened that my mother was getting her hair braided by a 16-year-old who was doing a tremendous job, and when I came back to America and found out to braid hair, you need to go through an examination process and go to school, it was pretty alarming to me. When we talk about the land of the free and the brave, you have an economic vehicle that is inaccessible unless the government sends out that permission slip.

In regard to the bill itself, I applaud the bill sponsor for doing a tremendous job on really creating a market of competing ideas and processes, not only for current individuals who are considering pursuing a license in barber school or cosmetology but also future generations that look forward to pursuing their American dream. Currently as it stands, it is not working, as it was shared in the presentation.

Actually, you probably have some folks here in opposition who are going to talk about their business model and how important it is to ensure that some of those guidelines, concerns, and fears we have shared are preserved. But history has shown that is not the case. If anything, I think Nevada can be a great leader in allowing those markets of ideas to format some amazing statistics that after a couple of years, we can come back and revisit.

It does not get rid of barber schools; if anything, it allows an individual to have a choice, and that is what it is all about. That is what freedom is about: ensuring individuals who want to wake up and provide for not only themselves, but also for their family, have an opportunity to do so. I hope that you support A.B. 225 to ensure the future posterity of this beautiful state has the ability to pursue their dreams.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else in Las Vegas wishing to testify in support? [There was no one.] Is there anyone on the line?

Hugh Anderson, Government Affairs Committee Chair, Vegas Chamber:
The Chamber supports A.B. 225 because this is a good governance reform bill that supports entrepreneurs and innovative methods to help modernize the industry. As you know, the Chamber has been a longtime advocate for increased efficiencies within the state agencies and boards, expanding career options for Nevadans and encouraging workforce development opportunities.

As the former chair of the Governor's Workforce Development Board, this is also a good workforce development bill. We want to encourage Nevadans to pursue their professional endeavors and foster that spirit of Nevada ingenuity. As the longest-serving trustee for the Vegas Chamber, I have heard from our members for years about the fundamental need to modernize the educational options within the industry, but also the need for greater transparency and oversight.

The Chamber believes that A.B. 225 will give Nevadans affordable pathways to enter the industry by offering apprentice options, reducing unnecessary regulatory barriers for positions like hair braider and shampoo technologist, and leveling the playing field for entrepreneurs and future Nevadans that want to be in this industry. These are some of the reasons why the Chamber is in support of this bill. And we ask that you consider your support of A.B. 225.

Traci Simon, Owner, Get a Haircut Barbershop, Las Vegas, Nevada:
My husband and I are the owners of Get a Haircut Barbershop in Las Vegas. We have been running our shop in Las Vegas since 2017, and JJ, my husband, has been cutting hair for 25 years. As a barbershop owner, I can attest to how these reforms are much needed in Nevada's barbering industry. Working with my husband and opening our shop together has opened my eyes to how unnecessary and burdensome Nevada's barbering laws are.

My husband originally went to cosmetology school in California and has been doing men's haircuts for many years. But when we moved to Nevada, he was unable to get a job in a barbershop because he did not have a barber's license. He had to go back to California and get his barber license there because there were so few barbering schools in southern Nevada. At the time he returned to Las Vegas, he had to take the exam since Nevada refused to recognize his out-of-state license. We have been running our barbershop since 2017, and we continue to face these same frustrating issues.

Since we opened, we have been unable to hire another barber to work in our shop due to Nevada's difficult and unnecessary regulations. We have received a number of applications from talented stylists, but we cannot hire them because they either hold an out-of-state license or a cosmetology license. Instead of hiring any of these qualified applicants, JJ has been the only barber in our shop.

Reform is desperately needed. This bill would improve reciprocity for out-of-state licenses and permit cosmetologists and barbers to work in the same shop. These are commonsense reforms in Nevada's oppressive regulations, removing barriers for people who just want to be able to work and to use the qualifications they already have. I urge the Committee to support this bill and embrace new opportunities for Nevada's barbering industry.

LaNiqua McCloud, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I want to first thank the sponsors for bringing this forward. Honestly, I am astonished that this has not been brought forward before. Over the years, I have heard a lot about the egregious regulations and barriers that are applied to women who just simply want to braid hair and utilize that as an economic vehicle.

I remember there was a question asked about how many states have already approved this before or exempt hair braiders; it is actually 36. I feel strongly that our constituents need to be heard, and I would strongly encourage our legislators to support this.

I do believe not supporting this would send a clear message to hardworking Nevadans, especially those who braid hair and people who like to be barbers, that you do not really support economic and entrepreneurship in a way that is accessible to everybody. I strongly encourage you to support this bill, and I am honestly just happy that it is being brought forward after all this time.

[Documents in support, Exhibit X and Exhibit Y, were submitted but not discussed and will become part of the record.]

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else on the line? [There was no one.] We will move to testimony in opposition. Is there anyone here in Carson City wishing to testify in opposition to A.B. 225?

A'Esha Goins, Founder, Black Joy Consulting, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am testifying in opposition to this bill just for a couple of reasons, but there is something that I believe could be done. I just do not think we have gotten there. As a person, people do not know this about me, but I did graduate from Vo-Tech with cosmetology hours. I do recognize there are some things that could and should change. I just do not think we are there yet. I met with the sponsor today and had a brief conversation. My client will be talking after this in Las Vegas, so I am going to yield my time.

William C. Horne, representing State Board of Cosmetology:
Unfortunately, in opposition to this bill. We appreciate the Assemblymember's efforts in speaking with my client; we have had a couple of phone calls and stakeholder meetings. With his prerogative, he chose not to accept the Board's amendments to the bill [Exhibit Z].

I want to address just a couple of things. First off, braiders, they do not go to school. They just take an exam on sanitation and Nevada law. We appreciate that he is keeping the hours of the training for cosmetologists in there. There are also issues in the bill on removing late fees. We find that problematic in that the Board actually sends out a notice 90 days prior to your license being renewed and then every 30 days after that. It was explained that you are trying to remove this barrier; for some, it is a burden. But if you take away fees for being late, then the other things we put in place for privileged licenses, what is to prevent them from continuing to be late throughout the year? We believe the mechanism that is set in place with the multiple notices for your renewal is sufficient and should not be deleted. They worked on this in the *Nevada Administrative Code* (NAC) Chapter 644A in April after four years of rewrites and reviews. To get you caught up, this is from the 2021 and 2023 Legislative Sessions. There are no bars to cosmetology licenses; the fee is $35 a year and it only requires a tenth-grade education to do this.

It is important to remember that the Board's responsibility, first and foremost, is the protection and safety of the populace. That is the mission, and when there are changes to laws and licenses that are designed to protect, to make sure that a licensee is properly trained to provide these services, we want to make sure they are safe, and we believe there is still, as

the sponsor said, a lot of work to be done with this. The Board stands ready to work with the sponsor going forward, but we think it does need a lot of work, and maybe during the interim, if this bill is in process, we will continue to work with him.

Chair Marzola:
Mr. Horne, did you say the Board has an amendment?

William Horne:
Yes, Madam Chair, the Board did send an amendment to Assemblymember Nguyen for his consideration.

[Exhibit AA was submitted but not discussed and will become part of the record.]

Chair Marzola:
And I know at this time it has not been accepted, but can you please send it to the Committee? Is there anyone else in Carson City wishing to testify in opposition? You may begin when you are ready.

Brenda Castaneda, Office Administrator, Northern Nevada Barber Academy, Sparks, Nevada:
As far as the 18-year age, it is 16.5. They must have a GED [General Education Diploma] transcript or a high school diploma to be able to come in. I feel like the reason why people are not passing is for a reason. From what I have seen, right off the bat, here at our school they start with proper preparation and sanitation, which I feel is the most important thing even before even getting clippers or anything in their hands; that is how it is at our school.

From what I have heard of everything, I feel like there is a reason why the Nevada State Board of Cosmetology and the Nevada State Barbers' Health and Sanitation Board have these regulations, and they are there for a reason—for the protection of our community. I oppose A.B. 225. [Written testimony was submitted, Exhibit BB.]

Kevin Polanco, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:
I am currently a student at Northern Nevada Barber Academy. I am in cosmetology, and I am doing the crossover program. I think over the years, the barber program has gotten watered down because at one point, barbers were surgeons and did a lot more than just barbering; they were dentists and other things. I feel like sometimes lowering the standards is not better because if we raise our standards, a lot more people would want to do it with the same ambition that other people have gone through to get there. In other words, put in the time that the rest have put in. That is pretty much it; I was not really prepared.

Matthew Lee, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:
I am also a student at the Northern Nevada Barber Academy, and I do oppose A.B. 225. I believe there are some good points in here, but I do think there needs to be a process of changing some things in there with regard to barbering.

I am 31 years old. I started this career late, but I think if you have the passion for it and the drive for it, why not go and do it? We have kids who start younger than 18, and we have people in our school who are almost 50. I think that if you have the passion for it, you can go do it.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else in Carson City who wishes to testify in opposition? [There was no one.] I see you are seated in Las Vegas. You may begin when you are ready.

Marcus Allen, Owner, Masterpiece Barber School, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a barber. I have been a barber for 27 years. I am the owner of Masterpiece Barber School, Masterpiece Barbershop 1, Masterpiece Barbershop 2, and Masterpiece Barbershop 3 and 4.

I stand before you. First of all, I want to thank the Committee for giving us the opportunity to express ourselves on this. We are one of the things—I had a whole other list, but we will go over this right here. Some of the stuff that was spoken earlier, they cannot answer the question, maybe I can help you guys out with that. There is no problem at all with transferring hours in the state of Nevada; never has been a problem, and there never is a problem. Another thing was the waiting list; there is no waiting list in any of the schools at all at this present time. We have a program that the state helped us out with. We are reforming prisoners from prison going to barber school. We have over 80 percent, or a little bit less, maybe 75 percent, Latino students that are in all the schools.

Then another thing was how many schools we have in Las Vegas. We have five schools, three out of the five schools came from under Masterpiece itself, and we have another one in northern Nevada, and we have two more schools in the process of opening this year with no waiting list. We have a room full of students, barbershop owners, and barber school owners, and we have another room behind us full of students and other barbershop owners who are here speaking in opposition to this bill. Students know they do need these lessons to take this career on. At my school right now, there is a 92 percent passing rate, and we had 90 percent job placement. We have no problem with, and I can speak for the other schools, they are doing pretty good too. And we have no problem with them actually planning.

Now, let us talk about some of the hands-on experience. I am a barber. I have been a barber for 27 years. I had three barbershops at the time. I needed to go back to barber school to become a barber instructor. I was a really good barber, but I was not a good barber instructor. I had to learn how to instruct and teach individuals. You have different learners and just because I was good at my craft, which did not mean I could deliver a message to a student who does not know nothing about this craft. Therefore, if I only took two exams, one to become a barber, and the next one to become a barber instructor. I had no problem with that at all. And for the record, for the other two barbershop owners that spoke real—

Chair Marzola:
If you can, please wrap up your testimony.

Marcus Allen:
Yes, I can wrap it up really quick. The last thing is that Gabriel, the owner of the barbershop. He is not a barber and was just fined recently in his barbershop and now he is going to teach a student how to be a barber. There is one more thing. Whenever any other state sneezes, Nevada does not have to catch a cold. Let us protect our Nevadans.

Gwen Braimoh, Executive Director, Expertise Cosmetology and Barbering Institute, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a cosmetology educator, and I am also a trainer for a national curriculum company, the largest in the country. I am in opposition to A.B. 225. There were multiple key reasons for it, but because of the time constraint, I want to just talk about apprenticeship. If we allow apprenticeships, we are going to be allowing barbers and cosmetologists to train in their salons and barbershops without the proper credentials to be able to administer a curriculum, which has multiple methods of teaching, which is knowing the learner styles and learner types. Theory is actually practical procedure, so if they do not have a very solid theory background, how will they be able to actually practice those procedures?

Before I close, I wanted just to talk about allowing an individual to train to be able to service our consumers and posting a sign saying, Get your hair done at your own risk. I mean, it would be just the beginning of deregulation. I understand a lot of the agencies came before supporting this. I am an ex-board member of the State Board of Cosmetology. In the past, we had to deal with a lot of interstate justice, different organizations coming in to deregulate our license. This license is a career, and we do not want to water it down. We want to be able to support it. So please, as I close, I am asking the Committee to please hear out the experts in this industry who have the experience, because creating fewer barriers, we are for it. We would like to sit down and find out what the real barriers are. [Letter was submitted, Exhibit CC.]

Chair Marzola:
Can you please wrap up your testimony?

Gwen Braimoh:
Yes, I am all done.

Antinette Maestas, Secretary/Treasurer, State Barbers' Health and Sanitation Board:
I am here to express the Barber Board's opposition to A.B. 225, particularly regarding the apprenticeship program, the removal of licensing requirements, and the potential impact on the safety and professionalism of the Nevada barbering industry.

While reducing barriers to entry is a worthy goal, apprenticeship models in other states such as Arizona and California have shown alarmingly low pass rates: 44 percent and 42 percent for first-time test takers. In contrast, Nevada's barber apprentice program is after 1,500 hours of school. The apprenticeship—I am going to get off topic just for a second. The apprenticeship program was set up—you have to understand when they get out of school, they pass the exam, and they become an apprentice barber, they go to a shop and make the

same amount of money as the guy standing right next to them does; they are working fulltime. The reason that was set up as a mentorship was because when you get out of school, you think you have got it going on. You have a lot to learn when you stand beside a master barber. Our pass rate is 73 percent.

Assembly Bill 225 proposes to allow individuals to bypass the licensing exam after the on-the-job training undermines this safeguard, potentially jeopardizing public safety. I have seen the consequences of inadequate training firsthand, including a case where improper blood spill procedures during the examination exposed both the student and the public to serious health issues. Federally registered apprenticeship programs require barbers to pay apprentices, which raises concerns about barbers being able to devote the time and resources necessary for effective mentorship.

Chair Marzola:
Ma'am. Can you please wrap up your testimony?

Antinette Maestas:
I can, and furthermore, many apprenticeship programs lack the theory education needed. There are concerns with the qualifications of the instructor training. A cosmetologist cannot teach barbering if they do not know the fundamentals of barbering. I would urge you to vote no. [Letter was submitted, Exhibit DD.]

Carl L. Littles, Co-owner, Original Barber School, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am here on behalf of the Original Barber School and the Original Barbershop. I am a local barber as well, born and raised in Las Vegas. While I oppose this bill, we firmly believe that any expansion of this apprenticeship program with improper training of industry standards will tragically affect our communities.

The barber profession requires a high level of skill, sanitation knowledge, and customer service expertise that should not be compromised for the sake of accessibility. Without structured education and oversight, the integrity of our trade and the success of our future professionals are at risk. Proper training is not about cutting hair; it is about the health, safety, and maintaining professionalism that has built trust in our industry and also in our community.

If A.B. 225 moves forward, cutting corners in training will not only weaken our profession but also impact our public and consumer confidence as well. We urge you, Committee, to consider the long-term consequences of passing a bill that does not uphold rigorous training standards, particularly deregulating provisions that could negatively affect our licensed professionals who have invested in their craft. Not once have I ever heard any licensed barber or professional say they regret investing money, finances, or their time into their craft.

I want to touch a little bit on license deregulation. If you guys allow someone to go and be trained by a barber, that is deregulating somebody's license. That is deregulating the instructor license. That someone is trained to train a barber, knows how to practice safety, sanitation, and patron protection. [Letter was submitted, Exhibit EE.]

Nimi Dhaliwal Espinoza, School Director, Avalon Institute, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a licensed cosmetologist and school director with 17 years of experience in this profession. I am here today to strongly oppose A.B. 225, which seeks to deregulate braiding and shampooing services within our industry.

While I understand the intention behind this bill, maybe to increase accessibility and reduce barriers to entry, the reality is that these services are not as simple or risk-free as they may appear. Shampooing and braiding are not just routine beauty services. They involve close physical contact, the use of chemicals and water near the scalp and skin, and understanding of sanitation, hygiene, and potential health risks. By removing regulatory oversight and licensing requirements, we jeopardize the safety of clients and undermine the professionalism and integrity of our industry.

Proper training ensures that practitioners can recognize scalp conditions, prevent cross contamination, and use products safely. Licensing requirements exist not just to protect cosmetologists, but to protect the public. Deregulation sends a dangerous message that safety, education, accountability, and personal care are optional. It places consumers at risk and devalues the commitment of licensed professionals who have invested time and resources into their craft.

I respectfully urge you to reject A.B. 225 and work instead toward solutions that balance accessibility with safety and standards. Our clients deserve nothing less.

Junis McDaniels, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I have been an educator for 5 years and a barber for 24 years. As an educator, I have learned the importance of 1,500 hours of barber school, the integrity and safety, and the overall well-being of becoming a barber. In my early years, barbering was looked down on and frowned upon. For us to get to this place in Las Vegas has been a beautiful process.

For people to step in our lane and dictate things they know nothing about is a slap in the face. How can we be sitting here debating how important education is? Anything worth something takes sacrifice. In the world today, we seem to be eliminating sacrifice, ignoring that there are levels in everything we do.

It would be detrimental to the profession to skip barber school. When I was becoming a barber, there was not even a school in Nevada. We had to sacrifice moving to another state; completing hours and experience was so critical in my life. Personally, I grew so much in that time and learned so much about myself. The ups and the downs, the fight to finish and

stay dedicated and disciplined are the keys. We are not just teaching barbering; we are changing lives, changing mindsets, and changing outcomes. It is bigger than anatomy and chemistry; it is life. It is a part of a process that should never change.

It is hard enough for the Board to regulate in the current state of how they regulate now. A free-for-all system where sharks would take advantage of apprenticeships for their own personal gain. Not investing in the well-being of a barber and feeding on desperation with no accountability for the barber's future.

As an educator, I give everything inside of me, including all my time, to ensure competency in producing great, valuable members of society. The blueprint for success and safety it takes to be a barber is 1,500 hours of barber school.

Most of my students from the past believe barber school was the best thing that ever happened to them. I stand before you today to say, do not take away from this; add value to it. Understand we are pillars in this community. Do not minimize or downplay it, and I say this with all respect; with many differences and opinions, we can all agree on this: education is for a lifetime and it is essential. Do not confuse preparation with barriers and let us address real barriers, because school is not one of them. I repeat, school is not a barrier.

Lisa Lewis, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am here as a registrar for the Barber Institute and Cosmetology Institute. I am also a licensed cosmetology instructor, and I am an advanced aesthetician. I am a state-approved Continuing Education Unit (CEU) provider, and I have helped form the national testing for cosmetology applicants. I say that to show I can look at this through a variety of different lenses.

This bill is problematic. It definitely leads to deregulating our industry. I feel like we are trying to create opportunities to help a few while affecting many. We do not just show our students the practical skills; it is also the theory that is required and necessary for them to have an understanding and to be proficient in certain areas.

I do not want you guys to think lightly of it; we are just showing people how to cut hair. It is anatomy, it is physiology, it is chemistry, it is contraindications, it is consultations, and it is chemical services. There is a lot more that goes into this profession than what we are talking about today, and the fact that you can take our credentials that we have earned and spent—I have spent 28 years in this industry—it would be like me taking away some of your bachelor's and master's degrees. It is insulting. We are not just here to beautify people. We are here to create something better than what we had when we were in school.

The schools are highly governed. Our licenses are highly governed. As a licensed instructor, I have to get CEUs every year to know how to teach. That means I can work with someone whose English is not their first language. They may have a learning disability; they may have

a comprehension issue; all of those individuals I can teach because I have been taught. So let us not devalue what we are doing here as schools and as our industry, and I do not agree with this bill, and I will fight till the end of it.

Victor De Leon, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a barber student here in Nevada at Masterpiece Barber School. I am here to ask for you to vote no on A.B. 225. This bill threatens the integrity of the barbering industry by lowering the standards we have worked hard to uphold. Barbering is not just about cutting hair. It is about public health, sanitation, proper training, and safety. We use sharp tools near people's skin on a daily basis, and we are responsible for preventing infections and cross-contamination.

As a student, I have invested my time, money, and energy into learning the right way through a structured education. Assembly Bill 225 would allow people to bypass this training through looser apprenticeship programs that just do not guarantee the same level of education or oversight. This bill would devalue the license we all work so hard for, put clients at risk, and open the industry to unqualified individuals. It is not just unfair to current students and professionals; it is unsafe for the public.

We all want to grow in this industry, yes, but not at the cost of its quality, safety, and credibility. Please protect Nevada's barbers and vote no on A.B. 225. [Written testimony was submitted, Exhibit FF.]

Chris Mann, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I want to address specifically within the bill reducing the amount of hours for schooling, I think, 1,000 hours from 1,500 hours. You have to understand how our textbook is structured. In the barbering world, where chemical texture services, hair coloring, and women's haircutting are within our textbook, is the additional 500 hours that they would have to earn in order to get their license. I just wanted to address that I am really against it because that is in our textbook. That is what we are supposed to learn, and 1,000 hours is not enough hours for you to put this information within that.

I have worked for 25 years; I have worked in 5 different states that had apprentice programs and barbering schools, and as far as options are concerned, we have a concern with dealing with our education, not just in barbering but in our total society in America.

Chair Marzola:
Just to let everyone know in Las Vegas, I will now only take the three who are sitting, and then we must move to the phone lines. You may begin when you are ready.

Benita Hollie, Campus Director, Euphoria Institute of Beauty Arts & Sciences, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am the director at the Euphoria Institute; we have been in Summerlin for well over 20 years. I have been in the business for 40 years as a licensed cosmetologist. I have been in education for over 30 years, and I have been at Euphoria for over 20. There is some longevity there.

I speak to that because there were some questions about whether or not students are graduating on time and all of those things. I can speak for Euphoria Institute as far as our retention and our students staying in school and completing their program. We are at a 95 to 97 percent retention rate, along with our graduation rate being 97 percent and our students are meeting our AAA SCC benchmark of 70 percent placement in the industry.

With that being said, all of the obstacles that supposedly have been addressed in this bill, it appears that now we want to put nonprofessionals with professionals who probably have had some citations. At least someone spoke about a citation with one of the industry experts that spoke today. Ultimately, students and people who come into our industry need to learn how to protect it.

There are some serious contagious, communicable diseases out there that easily spread to other individuals, and for a novice to not know what that looks like or someone in the industry that maybe has never seen tinea pedis or tinea manuum or, and you may not even know what that means—ringworm—and it is highly contagious. My concern is more about the safety conditions and the safety in our industry, more so than I think someone said here—

Chair Marzola:
Please wrap up your testimony.

Benita Hollie:
That is all I have.

Chair Marzola:
After the two individuals who are sitting testify, I am going to ask everyone to stand who was not able to testify, if you can please stay in the room. The two of you may begin when you are ready.

Melissa Martinez, Campus Director, Milan Institute, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am representing professionals and educators in the beauty industry, a field that not only powers small businesses and entrepreneurship but also plays a crucial role in public safety. Our work goes beyond appearances, whether in cosmetology or barbering.

Improper training can lead to serious risks like infections, chemical burns, and the spread of dangerous pathogens. This is why we need to uphold strong educational standards. It compromises the quality of education, undermines public safety, and damages industry credibility. Our students deserve thorough, hands-on practice in both theory and in practice before entering the workforce, ensuring that they are fully prepared to serve the community safely.

Schools not only hold our students accountable by instilling discipline and ethical practices, but they also have completion, placement, and licensure requirements that ensure graduates meet professional standards. We are not asking for unnecessary red tape. We are asking for

common sense, a balanced approach that protects both our future professionals and the people they serve. Let us ensure that we educate and fully regulate wisely and always keep public safety at the forefront.

Ramon Green, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I oppose A.B. 225 and I can explain to you why, but I am going to need you guys to take out a piece of paper and a pen, as far as the Committee. A lot of the questions that were asked by the so-called experts in support of this bill, the answers to those questions are already in our law books. This does a disservice to know that someone in our state is pushing a bill forward in our state that does not even understand the laws that are in our state.

When you ask the question, how old you have to be—we are talking about NRS [*Nevada Revised Statutes*] 643.070 that already exists in the law book that explains that. We also have NRS 643.080, which explains the qualifications for an apprentice. We have NAC [*Nevada Administrative Code*] 643.660, which explains the hours, the requirements, and how long the course is, which is 10 months. You have a year to complete that. That is already in the law book. When we talk about the NRS 643.120, that is the admission of apprentices from other jurisdictions. When we talk about NRS 643.130, that is the issuance of a temporary license for somebody that is not here. When you talk about NAC 643.025, that talks about the licenses of endorsement, which means if you are a barber qualified in another state, the only thing you have to do is provide the information that you have been an active barber 5 out of the last 10 years, and you will be issued a license in the state of Nevada.

When we talk about opening up opportunities, 2008 was the first barber school that was opened up. Since 2017—

Chair Marzola:
If you can, please wrap up your testimony because your time is almost up.

Ramon Green:
I just want to say this: the power of the people is greater than the people in power.

Chair Marzola:
For everyone who did not get to testify today, if you could please stand in Las Vegas. First, I want to say thank you so much for coming to the Committee room for being part of the process and for showing up. I am sorry you did not get to testify today, but if you do have your testimony in writing, please provide it to the committee secretary in the room down in Las Vegas, and I will make sure it is posted and every Committee member receives it. Is there anyone on the line wishing to testify in opposition?

Andeen M. Rose, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a licensed cosmetologist and barber and instructor in the state of Nevada in Las Vegas. I do oppose A.B. 225, as it is a grave threat to the public safety by undermining critical protections designed to safeguard the health and welfare of our consumers. By relaxing the

regulatory standards, this legislation significantly increases risk and potential harm, ultimately failing to serve the individuals that the cosmetology and barbering industry is intended to support. The possible consequences of this deregulation are concerning.

The current system emphasizes that licensed training is a robust safeguard for public safety, cosmetology, and barbering. This training provided by a licensed school is not just necessary; it is essential. It upholds health and sanitation standards protecting the public from communicable diseases. These educational programs equip technicians with the required knowledge and skills to perform their services safely and effectively, thus minimizing the risk of hazardous chemical incidents. Abandoning these regulations would compromise these vital safeguards and seriously risk consumers' well-being.

The education offered by barber and cosmetology schools is not just important, it is crucial. It instills an understanding of safety and sanitation in students. Preparing them to use chemicals correctly reduces the likelihood of accidents and ensures a safe environment for all clients. This foundational training is not just imperative; it is a responsibility we all share to maintain high industry standards and promote public health.

Introducing an apprentice program without proper regulation creates significant dangers. Unlike the structured educational framework provided by accredited barber and cosmetology schools which offer a standardized curriculum and comprehensive training, an apprentice model might not ensure the consistent education. This inconsistency can lead to gaps in knowledge and skill. Additionally, if the department—

Chair Marzola:
If you can, please end your testimony, your time is up.

Andeen Rose:
It is essential to prioritize a well-regulated educational framework to protect public safety and professional standards. [Letter was submitted, Exhibit GG.]

Angie Bernardy, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:
I am a licensed cosmetologist in the Reno area. I would like to oppose A.B. 225 for several reasons with the apprenticeship. I can see that being a big health hazard for the public.

There are so many facets to this bill that there are little pieces in there that do make sense, combining cosmetologists and barbering so it is easier for people to work together. The apprenticeship program does not really make sense; there are so many benefits to being in school. I did hear a 3 percent infection control is all that is taught. I know for a fact it is way more than that because it is taught throughout their program.

There was talk of it being a hardship for other people; there are so many scholarships that I have seen—loans and FAFSAs [Free Application for Federal Student Aid]—just like any other educational institution, that is not necessarily a closed door for people; there are things you have to do to get approved for those.

Andres Dominguez, Owner, Speakeasy Barbershop, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am third-generation barber; I have seen my grandfather be a barber. I have seen my uncle be a barber, and my mom is in cosmetology. So I grew up in this. I just wanted to touch on one thing. They want to lower the bar to see if it is a venture that they see themselves going into in the future. That is easily done; go hang out in the barbershop or go hang out in the cosmetology salon and see if that is an environment you want to be a part of. With our city and our state growing the way it is, this is not a time for us to lower the bar and make it easier by watering down everything. This is a time for us to actually step up and allow us to show everybody else and be examples of why it is so important.

My shop is inside the El Cortez Hotel and Casino on Fremont Street. We get a good majority of locals, but even more so than that, we get a lot of people that are visiting, and it is important for our guys to come to the shop, for our apprentices to come to the shop, and already have that understanding of the risk that is actually out there so they can be able to identify what potentially is in front of them and to not just have somebody who does not know anything. We are lowering the bar to accept them in to maybe learn on the spot, but we can already have cross-infected somebody else or just really cause mayhem.

People are not just here locally in Vegas; they are visiting Vegas. Anything that happens here is going to be transmitted and taken elsewhere. I have clients from all over that applaud us all the time because they are tired of their locations back home, where it is either a joint cosmetology and barbering, things are watered down, or they deregulate certain things, and it gets watered down. I just want to really state that it is very important for us to keep up—

Chair Marzola:
Sir, can you please wrap up your testimony?

Andres Dominguez:
Absolutely, and really quick, I never say this, but I am one of those Latino guys who comes from a rough area as well; we never use it as a crutch. We see it as a badge of honor that we got through it, and now we are providing for our family.

Richard Bautista, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
Shout-out to James the Barber and his barbershop out there in Las Vegas. I just want to ask this Nguyen guy what he has against a good haircut. In my experience, people that go through this entire process of getting trained are still liable to give a bad haircut. What do you think is going to happen if you fast-track that process? You are going to have a bunch of people with bad haircuts, and that is just no good. Deregulating seems to be like a conservative thing. I am confused that guy is a Democrat. Regulation—

Chair Marzola:
Sir, I need you to talk about the bill and not anyone individually. Do you want to continue your opposition testimony?

Richard Bautista:
Yes, the only thing left to say is that regulations are put in place to protect the consumer. Regulations make the product safe for the consumer. That is all I have to say.

Robin Walsh, Campus Director, Milan Institute of Cosmetology, Reno, Nevada:
I am in opposition to A.B. 225. In a previous meeting with Assemblymember Nguyen, it was mentioned on multiple occasions that offering apprenticeships to create additional access to perhaps socioeconomically disadvantaged people or maybe people in rural areas, he gave kind of case by case. While I can appreciate providing additional access, it seems like taking education out of schools and allowing online learners, even if it is just for those case-by-case situations, based on proven learner type, we are setting those students up for a lack of material retention and/or drop risk, not to mention their financial obligations.

To even allow case-by-case cosmetologists to oversee externs in salons, cosmetologists who are not licensed instructors, it really sets a liability based on a real lack of safety and sanitation training and just an overall lack of knowledge enforced by the State Board of Cosmetology.

To speak on creating access, there is a really good point, and I second what Angie Bernardy said. I do agree with the colocation of barbers and cosmos because there are really stringent requirements on safety and sanitation. That seems like a really reasonable way to create access. For the most part, I do oppose A.B. 225.

[Exhibit HH, proposed amendments, and Exhibit II, a collection of emails in opposition, were submitted but not discussed and will become part of the record.]

Chair Marzola:
That will end our time for phone testimony in opposition. We will move to testimony in neutral. Is there anyone here in Carson City wishing to testify in neutral? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Las Vegas wishing to testify in neutral?

Al Rojas, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I will be very, very brief. It is only obvious that on the one hand, we want to get more people who want to be barbers, and it takes a long time and costs a lot of money. But on the other hand, there are biological and hygiene issues that have to be addressed. Going in there and just doing an apprentice program is not going to address those things.

As I said before, I am an engineer, and as an engineer, usually all engineers take physics and science classes in the beginning for two years, and then the last two years you specialize in your specialty. I think these are issues that we have to consider if a full apprenticeship program is not the answer. A full school program is not the answer; high cost is not the answer. These are all issues that should be taken into consideration.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else in Las Vegas wishing to testify in neutral? [There was no one.] Is there anyone on the line wishing to testify in neutral? [There was no one.] Assemblymember, would you like to give any final remarks?

Jennifer McDonald:
I just want to specify that reducing licensing barriers is a nonpartisan issue. The Obama Administration agreed that licensing like this kills jobs and hurts lower-income workers. The Century Foundation, a progressive think tank, published research showing schools receive billions in federal funding, but most graduates earn near-poverty-level wages. Licensure requirements contribute to the high cost of cosmetology school programs, and students must often perform unpaid services that benefit the schools again.

For the very narrow service of cutting that we are talking about, that liability is still held by a licensed professional, we are not talking about anything that will allow folks to cut hair unsupervised, use chemicals unsupervised, or anything like that. This is all done under the supervision of a licensed professional. And I would also specify that cosmetology school instructors can become hired as instructors as soon as they graduate cosmetology school. They are not necessarily at the level of experience there that is required by law.

To conclude, the bill would only allow for blow-dry styling and supervised cutting without a license. We are not getting rid of anybody's full-service license. We just want to open more options and pathways into the industry.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
I just want to make sure I put my name out there again for the public to remember is Duy Nguyen. That is how it is pronounced. Then for all the stakeholders, I appreciate all the perspectives that have been given today. I have learned a lot.

This is still a work in progress, and I appreciate all your patience as the conversation continues. My goal is not to change its safety. My goal is not to change its schooling. My goal is to simply allow an additional step for members of the community to be a part of this amazing industry which my family has been in for many generations as well. So, I do have some knowledge of the industry, and I appreciate all your guidance and leadership, Chair and Committee members, as we move this forward, and I look forward to continuing the conversation.

Chair Marzola:
I will now close the hearing on A.B. 225. I will now open up for public comment. Is there anyone here in Carson City wishing to give public comment? [There was no one.] I see someone seated in Las Vegas. You may begin when you are ready.

Unidentified Speaker:
Yes, I will be very brief. It is this has to do with home accessibility, which has been a big issue. I have made comments to the fact that we should be putting residents first, and people

are saying, Well, you are kind of a little bit crazy. How do you determine who is a resident? How do you set the time frame? Well, I asked the people to look at how universities do it. If you are a resident for less than a year, you have to pay out-of-state fees.

I am thinking something along the lines of, if you are a resident for three to five years, maybe two to five years, and you have been working fulltime or something to that extent here in the state of Nevada, you should have first privilege to buy, to get affordable housing, or the programs that we are highly sacrificing our land and our resources to address the housing issue here in the state of Nevada.

Chair Marzola:
Is there anyone else in Las Vegas wishing to give public comment? [There was no one.] Is there anyone on the line? If you are wanting to give public comment, you may begin when you are ready.

Unidentified Caller:
Oh, yes, may I speak about A.B. 225?

Chair Marzola:
We have closed the hearing on that bill, but if you have written testimony, you may submit it, and we can upload it to NELIS [Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System].

Unidentified Caller:
I am just a concerned consumer because I do not want nobody cutting my hair without the proper training—

Chair Marzola:
I understand, but we have closed the hearing for A.B. 225. Is there anyone else on the line?

Vanessa Mascaro, Private Citizen:
I would like to note that we have heard here from the lobbyist American for Prosperity and that should be alarming enough. We have also heard mostly from business owners with several barbershops—

Chair Marzola:
Ma'am, if you are not giving public comment and you are wanting to testify on Assembly Bill 225, that bill has closed. You may submit your testimony in writing.

Vanessa Mascaro:
Believe me, I will.

Chair Marzola:
Thank you to all the Committee members for hanging on this Friday. Is there anyone else on the line? [There was no one.] Are there any comments before we adjourn? [There were none.]

With that, I will see you on Monday, April 7, 2025. This meeting is adjourned [at 3:09 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

_____
Denise Dimarzo
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

_____
Assemblymember Elaine H. Marzola, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
A.B. 44	C	Marjorie Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau	Work Session Document
A.B. 177	D	Marjorie Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau	Work Session Document
A.B. 259	E	Marjorie Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau	Work Session Document
A.B. 466	F	Marjorie Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau	Work Session Document
A.B. 512	G	Tray Abney, representing Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc.	Proposed amendment
A.B. 512	H	Adam Plain, Insurance Regulation Liaison, Division of Insurance, Department of Business and Industry	Written testimony
A.B. 423	I	Assemblymember Lisa K. Cole, Assembly District No. 4	Proposed amendment
A.B. 423	J	Jodi Stephens, representing Wireless Infrastructure Association	Proposed amendment
A.B. 423	K	Karmen Rajamani, Vice President, Government Affairs, Wireless Infrastructure Association	Document titled "WIA Proposed Talking Points – FCC Codification – Proposed State Legislation"
A.B. 423	L	Taylor Adams, President and CEO, Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada	Letter in support
A.B. 290	M	Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Assembly District No. 8	Proposed amendment
A.B. 290	N	Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Assembly District No. 8	Proposed amendment breakdown
A.B. 290	O	Max J. Coppes, President, Nevada Oncology Society; and Eric P. Winer, Chair of the Board, Association for Clinical Oncology	Letter in support
A.B. 290	P	Rupesh Parikh, Practice President, Comprehensive Cancer Centers of Nevada	Letter in support

A.B. 290	Q	Adam Plain, Insurance Regulation Liaison, Division of Insurance, Department of Business and Industry	Written testimony
A.B. 225	R	Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Assembly District No. 8	PowerPoint presentation titled "AB 225: Reducing Barriers for Barbering and Beauty Professionals"
A.B. 225	S	Jennifer McDonald, Cities Work Director and Assistant Director of Activism, Institute for Justice	Letter in support
A.B. 225	T	Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Assembly District No. 8	Proposed amendment
A.B. 225	U	Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Assembly District No. 8	Information sheet titled "AB225: Support Nevada Beauty and Barber Pros"
A.B. 225	V	Gabriel Herrera, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada	Written testimony
A.B. 225	W	James Anthony, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada	Written testimony
A.B. 225	X	Cody Arao, One APIA Nevada	Letter in support
A.B. 225	Y	Dakota Tapia, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada	Written testimony
A.B. 225	Z	Steven D. McDonald, Executive Director, State Board of Cosmetology	Proposed amendments
A.B. 225	AA	Steven D. McDonald, Executive Director, Nevada State Board of Cosmetology	Analysis
A.B. 225	BB	Brenda Castaneda, Office Administrator, Northern Nevada Barber Academy, Sparks, Nevada	Written testimony
A.B. 225	CC	Gwen Braimoh, Executive Director, Expertise Cosmetology and Barbering Institute, Las Vegas, Nevada	Letter in opposition
A.B. 225	DD	Antinette Maestas, Secretary/Treasurer, State Barbers' Health and Sanitation Board	Letter in opposition
A.B. 225	EE	Carl L. Littles, Co-owner, Original Barber School, Las Vegas, Nevada	Letter in opposition
A.B. 225	FF	Victor De Leon, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada	Written testimony
A.B. 225	GG	Andeen M. Rose, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada	Letter in opposition

A.B. 225	HH	Maura Scali-Sheahan, CEO, National Association of Barber Boards of America	Proposed amendments
A.B. 225	II	Various individuals	Collection of emails in opposition