

Badger Institute: Common-sense professional licensure reform bills headed to Gov. Walker's desk

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The Wisconsin State Assembly today passed two common-sense bills that will remove several onerous restrictions on barbers, cosmetologists and others in the beauty professions. Both measures were already passed in the Senate and are headed to Gov. Scott Walker's desk.

"The number of professions requiring a state license has grown exponentially over the last few decades," said Michael Jahr, vice president for outreach and special projects at the Badger Institute, which in April published a report, "Government's love for licensure," that told the real-world stories of Wisconsinites hampered by state licensure regulations.

"These requirements have little to do with public safety and a lot to do with establishing barriers to competition. When the state requires emergency medical technicians to have 180 hours of training to carry out their life-saving work and requires cosmetologists to have 1,550 hours of training, something is amiss," Jahr said.

The bills eliminate the separate licensure of cosmetology managers and barbering managers, a burdensome and unnecessary requirement that threatened the businesses of people like barber Albert Walker of Green Bay and cosmetologist Krissy Hudack of Iron River. Under current law, state-licensed barbers and

cosmetologists who want to start their own business are required to earn a separate manager's license or hire someone with a manager's license to effectively run their business for them.

The reforms also would allow licensed cosmetologists, barbers, manicurists and aestheticians to practice outside of a licensed establishment. Current law makes it illegal for these professionals to provide services at homes, weddings and other locations and events. On-demand services like those envisioned by UW student entrepreneur Samuel Haack are also forbidden under current law.

In addition, the bills eliminate the requirement that an applicant licensed in another state, territory or country in cosmetology, aesthetics, electrology, manicuring or barbering have at least 4,000 hours of experience in licensed practice before receiving a reciprocal license, saving significant money and time for aspiring hair stylist Cassie Mrotek of Milwaukee and other professionals who move to Wisconsin.

The bills also eliminate continuing education requirements for licensed barbers, cosmetologists, aestheticians, electrologists and manicurists, and end the requirement that they hold an additional certificate granted by the state Department of Safety and Professional Services in order to provide instruction in their respective professions.

The Badger Institute continues to examine professional licensing regulations in Wisconsin.