

# Sen. Kapenga: Applauds Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty for Report on Occupational Licensing

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Madison – State Senator Chris Kapenga (R-Delafield), the Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing, and State-Federal Relations released the following statement after the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) produced its second report highlighting how burdensome occupational licensing requirements restrain job growth, reduce mobility, and make it harder for people to find work.

“WILL’s report builds on the growing body of research definitively showing that unnecessary occupational licensing restricts access to jobs for people who need them most. Their proposed Red Tape Index enables us to quantify the burdensome costs placed on practitioners in our state. Their analysis shows that in the ten professions they reviewed, Wisconsin could increase employment by up to 7.06%. Those are real jobs we could achieve in Wisconsin, so I am excited to be advancing legislation that will increase access to those jobs,” said Senator Kapenga.

Earlier this month, Senator Kapenga circulated two bills with Representatives Kooyenga and Kleefisch that reduce many of the barriers in the barbering and cosmetology fields, one of the industries included in the study. Specifically, these bills do the following:

Location: Currently, with only a few exceptions, it is illegal to practice cosmetology or barbering outside of a licensed cosmetology facility. This will authorize and regulate practitioners to work outside of licensed establishments, such as prior to

weddings.

**Manager's License:** If a cosmetologist or barber wanted to open their own facility, they would be required to obtain a manager's license. However, to receive that license, they must first work 4,000 hours after they get their cosmetology license. That means that for at least two years after graduation, aspiring entrepreneurs cannot open their own business or even rent a booth at an establishment. This bill affords them that opportunity by repealing the cosmetology manager's license, which only four other states require.

**Reciprocity:** Wisconsin has one of the most burdensome reciprocity standards in the United States for cosmetologists and barbers wishing to move here. To receive a reciprocal license, an applicant must have both a license in good standing in another state and at least 4,000 hours of licensed experience. This bill encourages qualified practitioners to move to Wisconsin by simply requiring applicants have a license in good standing in another state.

**Continuing Education:** Only eighteen states currently require continuing education for standard cosmetology practitioners. Both practitioners in the field and schools providing continuing education courses agreed that current continuing education requirements are unnecessary. To decrease unnecessary regulation and increase the hours practitioners are available to work, this bill eliminates continuing education for cosmetology practitioners.

**Instructor's License:** Cosmetology schools are able to adequately determine the best candidates to serve as instructors in their classrooms. Recognizing the licensed schools' ability to screen applicants to be instructors, this bill eliminates the instructor's license for barbering, cosmetology, and related fields.

"These bills will better enable cosmetology and barbering professionals to work in Wisconsin and to take their services directly to customers," Senator Kapenga concluded. "Looking ahead, I will continue to work with my colleagues to right size and eliminate job-killing regulations."