

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE PASSES BILL TO COMBINE COSMETOLOGY AND BARBER BOARDS

The Mississippi Legislature passed House Bill 313 sponsored by Representative Gene Newman (R - Rankin) on April 16, 2024. The legislation, which received overwhelming bipartisan support, combines the current Mississippi State Board of Cosmetology and Mississippi State Board of Barber Examiners by creating a new agency, Mississippi State Board of Cosmetology and Barbering.

This legislation will better serve aspiring cosmetologists, barbers, estheticians, and nail technicians by bringing all four professions under one licensing agency. House Bill 313 removes regulatory hurdles for schools that teach both cosmetology and barbering, provides additional paths to licensure through career technical education and apprenticeship, and creates more avenues for licensure portability into professional practice in Mississippi from other states. Sharon Clark, Executive Director of the Mississippi State Board of Cosmetology said, "I am confident that these changes will support the current barbering and cosmetology industry and present opportunities for all professions under the umbrella of the new Mississippi State Board of Cosmetology and Barbering to continue to grow and thrive in Mississippi."

Key provisions of the bill include:

- Enhancing licensure portability from other states.
- Creating an apprenticeship program as an avenue for licensure.
- Removing the English requirement for licensure.
- Increasing testing availability for students across the state.

This legislation does not change the current training hour requirements for initial licensure. All current licensees of either the Mississippi State Board of Cosmetology or the Mississippi State Board of Barber Examiners will be permitted to continue practicing within the scope of their licenses until their current license expires or replacement license is issued.

House Bill 313 now heads to Governor Tate Reeves for consideration. If signed by Governor Reeves, House Bill 313 would become effective on July 1, 2024.