



People in other states who are trained in this field should be allowed to practice in Missouri, and people who wish to engage in this practice should have more than one option to learn the trade.

David Stokes is a policy analyst at the Show-Me Institute, which promotes market solutions for Missouri public policy.

TESTIMONY

March 6, 2013

RESTRUCTURING HEARING INSTRUMENT SPECIALIST REQUIREMENTS WOULD BENEFIT MISSOURI

By David Stokes

Testimony Before The Missouri House Of Representatives Professional Registration And Licensing Committee

To the Honorable Members of This Committee:

My name is David Stokes and I am a policy analyst for the Show-Me Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan Missouri-based think tank that supports free-market solutions for state policy. The ideas presented here are my own. This testimony is intended to summarize research that the Show-Me Institute has conducted and reviewed regarding the imposition of occupational licensing requirements.

One of the methods by which current practitioners and their respective licensing boards limit

competition within their field is through overly burdensome educational requirements. Some common-sense changes to licensing rules can reduce the burdens of the educational requirement in a way that will benefit consumers. House Bill 448, which modifies the requirements for hearing instrument specialists, makes some of those beneficial changes.

Even supporters of strict licensing must acknowledge the simple fact that tighter licensing rules increase prices. If there are fewer electricians, dentists, and plumbers in an area due to

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licensing rules, it will cost, on average, more to hire a member of that trade.

Missouri has very strict educational requirements for hearing instrument specialists. So strict, in fact, that only one institute in the state meets the requirement. These requirements will lead to a market shortage of people in this field, and will increase prices for consumers of hearing instruments. HB 448 addresses this issue by expanding the allowances for people trained as hearing instrument specialists in other states to work in Missouri and by requiring the state to establish an alternative to the one current option. Both of these changes will benefit people who need to use hearing aids. People in other states who are trained in this field should be allowed to practice

in Missouri, and people who wish to engage in this practice should have more than one option to learn the trade. HB 448 will have a positive change for competition within this field and will improve access to hearing instrument services for those who need it.

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