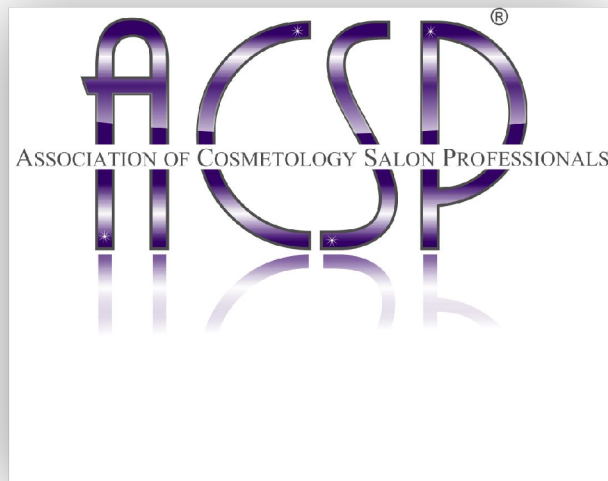




126TH SC GENERAL ASSEMBLY • 2025–2026 SESSION

Legislative Update

Cosmetology & Barbering Bills — Updated October 1, 2026

⚡ **ACTIVE LEGISLATIVE SESSION • STAY INFORMED • TAKE ACTION**

Why This Matters to You

Nine bills and regulatory resolutions in the 126th SC General Assembly directly affect cosmetologists, barbers, estheticians, nail technicians, hair braiders, and salon owners. **H 4752** — the most sweeping bill in the package — passed the House 109–0, was amended in the Senate to preserve apprenticeship pathways and reduce the merged board to 7 members, then appeared on the Senate floor calendar on June 25, 2026. It has *not yet been signed into law* and its fate in the remaining session is the number-one issue to watch. A bold new bill, **H 5699**, would make barbering licensure entirely voluntary. Two LLR regulations (5276 & 5307) are already in effect as of May 2025. ACSP is monitoring every bill closely. Track progress at www.scstatehouse.gov and make your voice heard.

Cosmetology Bill

Barbering Bill

Joint Resolution / Regulatory

Passed House / Engrossed

Stalled / Recommitted

In Committee

Regulation Already In Effect

Active Legislation

H 4752



WATCH CLOSELY — Cosmetology & Barbering Full Overhaul: Board Merger, New Licenses, Portable Operations

On Senate Floor Calendar — June 25, 2026 · Awaiting Senate Vote



House Passed 109–0 on Feb. 25, 2026 · Senate LCI Committee Amended & Advanced May 2026



Reps. Wooten, McCabe, Edgerton, White & Anderson · Senate LCI Committee amendments pending

The most consequential beauty industry bill in SC in decades. H 4752 passed the full House unanimously (109–0) and was significantly amended by the Senate Labor, Commerce & Industry Committee before being sent to the Senate floor. The Senate version differs from the House version in important ways — **ACSP members should read both.**

What the bill does (as amended by Senate committee):

- ① **Merges the two boards** — creates a new *State Board of Cosmetology and Barbering*, replacing both the Board of Barber Examiners and the Board of Cosmetology. The Senate amendment reduced the board from 9 to **7 members** and added a public member for balance.
- ② **Preserves apprenticeship pathway** — the Senate committee reinstated the apprenticeship pathway for barbers (which the House version removed), while still eliminating the separate one-year post-licensure apprenticeship requirement.
- ③ **New Hairstylist-Only License** — creates a cosmetology hairstylist license requiring approximately **1,100 hours** of training (hair services only, no chemicals/nails/skin). This aligns SC with neighboring states and lowers the barrier to entry for hair-only practitioners.
- ④ **Esthetician hours set at 600** — aligns with federal student financial aid (Title IV) eligibility rules, making esthetics students eligible for Pell Grants and federal loans at that threshold.
- ⑤ **Cross-practice authorized** — licensed barbers may work in cosmetology salons; licensed cosmetologists may work in barbershops.
- ⑥ **Portable operations recognized** — codifies a portable cosmetology credential for licensed practitioners performing on-site services at weddings, events, and similar venues.
- ⑦ **Shop-specific sanitation penalties** — separates penalties for shop owners from penalties for individual licensees; one violation = one citation and one administrative penalty (no double-billing).
- ⑧ **TB test removed** — eliminates a decades-old tuberculosis test requirement from the barber licensing process.
- ⑨ **Effective date: July 1, 2027** — if enacted, implementation is delayed to give LLR, schools, and practitioners time to transition.

Status as of Oct. 1, 2026: The bill has NOT yet passed the Senate or been signed into law. It appeared on the Senate floor calendar June 25, 2026. The session's remaining days are critical — contact your Senator now.



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H 5699 Barbers — Voluntary Licensure (Unlicensed Practice Allowed)

In Committee — No Action Since Introduction · Likely Carried Over to 2027

 17 Introduced May 13, 2026 · No Further Activity as of Oct. 1, 2026

 Six Republican Sponsors · House Medical, Military, Public & Municipal Affairs Committee

A sweeping bill that would make **barbering licensure entirely voluntary** in South Carolina. Adds § 40-7-15 distinguishing between licensed "registered barbers" and unlicensed barbers — both could legally practice. Licensed barbers retain exclusive use of the title "registered barber" and the right to supervise students; unlicensed barbers could cut hair but not misrepresent themselves as licensed. Introduced just days before the end of the 2025–26 session with no committee hearing scheduled. **No action taken since referral** — this bill would carry over to the 2027 session if the General Assembly does not adjourn sine die.

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H 4186 Barbers & Cosmetologists — Portable Operations & Express Styling

Superseded — Key Provisions Absorbed Into H 4752

 17 Introduced Mar. 20, 2025 · Blocked from Floor Vote May 7, 2025  Rep. Chris Wooten (R-Lexington)

Originally a standalone bill authorizing **portable cosmetology, esthetics, and nail technician operations** for state-licensed professionals. Blocked from the House floor by a single objection on May 7, 2025. Rep. Wooten subsequently folded H 4186's portable operations provisions into the sweeping **H 4752 amendment**, where they now appear as part of the larger board-merger and licensing overhaul. If H 4752 passes, this bill's core purpose is accomplished. H 4186 itself remains in House committee and is unlikely to move independently.

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H 3481 Cosmetologists — Off-Site Services (Home & Event Venues)

Referred to Committee — Medical, Military, Public & Municipal Affairs  17 Introduced Jan. 14, 2025

 Reps. McDaniel, Spann-Wilder, Pedalino & Grant

Adds § 40-13-265 to allow **licensed cosmetologists, estheticians, and nail technicians** to provide services in a client's home or at event venues (churches, hotels, and similar) when invited by the client and with venue permission. Also removes the current law's blanket prohibition on off-salon practice, replacing it with conforming language. This bill directly impacts mobile beauty professionals and bridal/event stylists. Still in House committee with no hearings scheduled — however, the portable

operations provisions in **H 4752's Senate amendment** address overlapping ground; H 3481's off-site provisions are more narrowly focused on invitations to private settings.

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H 3484 **Hair Braiders & Makeup Artists — Licensing Exemption**

Referred to Committee — Medical, Military, Public & Municipal Affairs  17 Introduced Jan. 14, 2025

 Reps. McDaniel, Wooten & Spann-Wilder

Revises the definition of **hair braiding** and fully exempts hair braiders and makeup artists from regulation by both the State Board of Barber Examiners and the State Board of Cosmetology. Also repeals the existing hair-braiding practitioner regulation statute (§ 40-7-255). Standalone makeup artistry and natural hair braiding would no longer require a cosmetology or barbering license under this bill.

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H 3483 **Blow-Dry Styling Services — Licensing Exemption**

Referred to Committee — Medical, Military, Public & Municipal Affairs  17 Introduced Jan. 14, 2025

 Reps. McDaniel & Spann-Wilder

Defines **blow-dry styling** as shampooing, conditioning, drying, arranging, curling, or styling using only mechanical devices and topical agents (balms, oils, serums). Excludes cutting hair or applying chemical treatments. Persons providing *only* blow-dry styling would be **exempt from licensure** under both the Barber Examiners and Cosmetology boards. Affects blowout bars and similar businesses.

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S 354 **LLR Regulation 5276 — Esthetics Practice & Salon/School Sanitary Rules**

Recommitted — Senate Labor, Commerce & Industry Committee

 17 Introduced Feb. 13, 2025 · Regulation effective May 23, 2025  Labor, Commerce & Industry Committee

Joint Resolution to formally approve LLR Regulation Document No. 5276 covering **Practice of Esthetics Generally** and **Sanitary & Safety Rules for Salons and Schools**. Note: the underlying regulation has already taken effect (May 23, 2025) and is now codified in Chapter 35. The resolution itself remains pending in Senate committee. Affects all licensed estheticians and salon/school operators statewide.

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S 352 LLR Regulation 5307 — Out-of-State Cosmetology Licensure

Recommitted — Senate Labor, Commerce & Industry Committee · March 5, 2025

 Introduced Feb. 13, 2025 · Regulation effective May 23, 2025  Labor, Commerce & Industry Committee

Joint Resolution to approve LLR Regulation Document No. 5307, which revises the rules for **licensure of out-of-state cosmetology applicants** seeking to practice in South Carolina. The underlying regulation is already in effect as of May 23, 2025. Out-of-state practitioners may qualify by endorsement if actively licensed elsewhere and either passing the NIC exam or holding 2+ years of licensure plus 4 hours of board-approved CE. The approving resolution itself was recommitted to Senate committee on March 5, 2025 and has not advanced since.

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S 603 LLR Regulation 5309 — Cosmetology Licensure Application Requirements

Recommitted — Senate Labor, Commerce & Industry Committee · May 7, 2025

 Introduced May 8, 2025 · No Further Action as of Oct. 1, 2026  Labor, Commerce & Industry Committee

Joint Resolution to approve LLR Regulation Document No. 5309. The regulation adds a new rule requiring **all applications for initial, endorsement, renewal, and reinstatement cosmetology licensure** to be accompanied by specific documentation. Affects every cosmetologist, esthetician, nail technician, and instructor applying for or renewing a South Carolina license. The resolution was recommitted to the Senate Labor, Commerce & Industry Committee on May 7, 2025 and has seen no further legislative action.

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Key Resources



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Association of Cosmetology Salon Professionals (ACSP)®

Keeping South Carolina's beauty professionals informed and empowered.

Track all legislation at www.scstatehouse.gov | 126th SC General Assembly, 2025–2026 Session

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