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*Testimony of Rep. Deqa Dhalac in support of*  
**LD 1861, An Act to Require Training on Textured Hair for Aestheticians,  
Barber Hair Stylists, Cosmetologists and Hair Designers**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor*

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, I am Deqa Dhalac, and I am honored to represent House District 120, which includes part of South Portland. I am here today to express my strong support for **LD 1861, An Act to Require Training on Textured Hair for Aestheticians, Barber Hair Stylists, Cosmetologists and Hair Designers**.

This bill would ensure that students entering the hairstyling profession receive training in the care and styling of textured and curly hair.

From personal experience, I know how difficult it can be to find professionals in Maine who are knowledgeable about working with textured hair. This lack of expertise can be both frustrating and isolating for individuals with textured or curly hair.

But beyond feelings of exclusion, the lack of proper training can lead to real harm. Improper handling such as over-processing or overly tight braiding can result in significant hair damage or even hair loss.

Often, all it takes is a little exposure to the specific needs of textured hair to make a big difference. I've had to guide stylists myself during appointments. While I am comfortable advocating for my needs, many people are not. A small amount of training can go a long way toward making all clients feel safe, understood and respected.

LD 1861 simply directs the department to ensure that training for hair professionals includes instruction on working with textured and curly hair. It does not increase the number of required hours, alter testing procedures or affect current licensing. The bill gives the department the flexibility to implement this within existing structures and resources.

With this bill, Maine has an opportunity to join a growing number of states including Louisiana, New York, Connecticut, Minnesota, California and Washington that have taken similar steps to ensure inclusive, safe training standards. New Jersey and Vermont are also considering similar legislation.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this important issue. I respectfully urge you to support LD 1861. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.