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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO NATURAL HAIR BRAIDING.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that natural hair  
2       braiding is a traditional practice that does not present  
3       significant health and safety risks to consumers or  
4       practitioners. While natural hair braiding is distinct from the  
5       practice of cosmetology or barbering, existing law has been  
6       interpreted to require natural hair braiders to obtain a license  
7       from the board of barbering and cosmetology, imposing an undue  
8       burden on those who engage in natural hair braiding as a  
9       profession. Because licensees are required to undergo education  
10      and training for cosmetology practices that are outside the  
11      scope of natural hair braiding, such as nail care and makeup  
12      application, the purpose of this Act is to exempt natural hair  
13      braiders from licensing requirements under the Barbering and  
14      Cosmetology Licensing Act under certain conditions.

15      SECTION 2. Chapter 439A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
16      amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
17      and to read as follows:



1        "§439A-        Natural hair braiders; exemption; conditions.

2        (a) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to require a  
3        natural hair braider that engages in the practice of natural  
4        hair braiding to obtain a license under this chapter; provided  
5        that the natural hair braider shall not perform or attempt to  
6        perform services regulated under this chapter or advertise  
7        services in such a way that misleads consumers to believe that  
8        the natural hair braider offers services that are otherwise  
9        regulated under this chapter. Any natural hair braider who  
10       violates this subsection may be subject to sanctions authorized  
11       under this chapter for the unlicensed practice of barbering or  
12       the unlicensed practice of cosmetology.

13       (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit  
14       a person from obtaining a private certification or an employer  
15       from requiring a person to obtain a private certification.

16       (c) For the purposes of this section:

17       "Braiding device" means clips, combs, crochet hooks,  
18       curlers, curling irons, hairpins, rollers, scissors, blunt-  
19       tipped needles, threads, or hair binders.

20       "Natural hair braider" means a person who engages in the  
21       practice of natural hair braiding.



1       "Natural hair braiding" includes:

2       (1) Twisting, locking, wrapping, weaving, cornrowing,  
3       extending, or braiding hair by hand or with braiding  
4       devices, and the minor trimming of hair extensions  
5       incidental thereto;

6       (2) The use of natural or synthetic hair extensions,  
7       natural or synthetic hair and fibers, decorative  
8       beads, and other hair accessories;

9       (3) The making and lacing of wigs from natural hair,  
10       natural fibers, synthetic fibers, and hair extensions;  
11       and

12       (4) The use of topical agents, including conditioners,  
13       gels, moisturizers, oils, or pomades in conjunction  
14       with the performance of the practices described in  
15       paragraphs (1) through (3).

16       "Natural hair braiding" does not include:

17       (1) The application of dyes, reactive chemicals, or other  
18       preparations to:

19       (A) Alter the color of hair; or

20       (B) Straighten, curl, or alter the structure of hair;

21       or



1        (2) The use of chemical hair joining agents including  
2        synthetic tape, keratin bonds, or fusion bonds."

3        SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

4        SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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JAN 20 2026



# H.B. NO. 1697

**Report Title:**

Board of Barbering and Cosmetology; Natural Hair Braiding;  
License; Exemption

**Description:**

Exempts natural hair braiders from licensing requirements under  
certain conditions.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is  
not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

