
Let People Work

Viewing Guide

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Teacher _____

Directions: As you watch the video, fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. Unfortunately, states have 30,000 _____ rules that take away that chance.
2. Everyone has a right of being able to pursue their own happiness, and what that means is that they have a right to engage in any of the common _____ of life.
3. The idea that anyone would be any less _____ because she moved one chair over and touched their face is absurd.
4. It's certainly convenient that _____ have a law that gets to keep new people that would compete with them, out.
5. Doesn't everybody need a second _____?

Now, take a few moments to reflect on the video and answer the questions below:

What is the purpose of occupational licensing for cosmetologists? _____

Why might the state board refuse to allow someone with a criminal record to practice cosmetology? _____

Why do you think established businesses might favor occupational licensing for their industry?

Policy Issues Raised by Licensure – Milton Friedman

(Excerpted from *Capitalism and Freedom* chapter IX)

It is important to distinguish three different levels of control: first, registration; second, certification; third, licensing.

By registration, I mean an arrangement under which individuals are required to list their names in some official register if they engage in certain kinds of activities. There is no provision for denying the right to engage in the activity to anyone who is willing to list his name. He may be charged a fee, either as a registration fee or as a scheme of taxation.

The second level is certification. The governmental agency may certify that an individual has certain skills but may not prevent, in any way, the practice of any occupation using these skills by people who do not have such a certificate....

The third stage is licensing proper. This is an arrangement under which one must obtain a license from a recognized authority in order to engage in the occupation. The license is more than a formality. It requires some demonstration of competence or the meeting of some tests ostensibly designed to insure competence, and anyone who does not have a license is not authorized to practice and is subject to a fine or a jail sentence if he does engage in practice....

[R]egistration may be a means to protect consumers against fraud. In general, liberal principles assign to the state the power to enforce contracts, and fraud involves the violation of a contract. It is, of course, dubious that one should go very far to protect in advance against fraud because of the interference with voluntary contracts involved in doing so. But I do not think that one can rule out on grounds of principle the possibility that there may be certain activities that are so likely to give rise to fraud as to render it desirable to have in advance a list of people known to be pursuing this activity....

Certification is much more difficult to justify. The reason is that this is something the private market generally can do for itself. This problem is the same for products as for people's services. There are private certification agencies in many areas that certify the competence of a person or the quality of a particular product. The Good Housekeeping seal is a private certification arrangement. For industrial products there are private testing laboratories that will certify to the quality of a particular product. For consumer products, there are consumer testing agencies of which Consumer's Union and Consumer's Research are the best known in the United States. Better Business Bureaus are voluntary organizations that certify the quality of particular dealers. Technical schools, colleges, and universities certify the quality of their graduates. One function of retailers and department stores is to certify the quality of the many items they sell. The consumer develops confidence in the store, and the store in turn has an incentive to earn this confidence by investigating the quality of the items it sells.

One can however argue that in some cases, or perhaps even in many, voluntary certification will not be carried as far as individuals would be willing to pay for carrying it because of the

difficulty of keeping the certification confidential. The issue is essentially the one involved in patents and copyrights, namely, whether individuals are in a position to capture the value of the services that they render to others. If I go into the business of certifying people, there may be no efficient way in which I can require you to pay for my certification. If I sell my certification information to one person, how can I keep him from passing it on to others? Consequently, it may not be possible to get effective voluntary exchange with respect to certification, even though this is a service that people would be willing to pay for if they had to. One way to get around this problem, as we get around other kinds of neighborhood effects, is to have governmental certification.

Another possible justification for certification is on monopoly grounds. There are some technical monopoly aspects to certification, since the cost of making a certification is largely independent of the number of people to whom the information is transmitted. However, it is by no means clear that monopoly is inevitable.

Licensure seems to me still more difficult to justify. It goes still farther in the direction of trenching upon the rights of individuals to enter into voluntary contracts. Nonetheless, there are some justifications given for licensure that the liberal will have to recognize as within his own conception of appropriate government action, though, as always, the advantages have to be weighed against the disadvantages. The main argument that is relevant to a liberal is the existence of neighborhood effects. The simplest and most obvious example is the "incompetent" physician who produces an epidemic. Insofar as he harms only his patient, that is simply a question of voluntary contract and exchange between the patient and his physician. On this score, there is no ground for intervention. However, it can be argued that if the physician treats his patient badly, he may unleash an epidemic that will cause harm to third parties who are not involved in the immediate transaction. In such a case, it is conceivable that everybody, including even the potential patient and physician, would be willing to submit to the restriction of the practice of medicine to "competent" people in order to prevent such epidemics from occurring....

The most obvious social cost is that any one of these measures, whether it be registration, certification, or licensure, almost inevitably becomes a tool in the hands of a special producer group to obtain a monopoly position at the expense of the rest of the public.... Once licensure is attained, the people who might develop an interest in undermining the regulations are kept from exerting their influence. They don't get a license, must therefore go into other occupations, and will lose interest. The result is invariably control over entry by members of the occupation itself and hence the establishment of a monopoly position.

Certification is much less harmful in this respect. If the certified "abuse" their special certificates; if, in certifying newcomers, members of the trade impose unnecessarily stringent requirements and reduce the number of practitioners too much, the price differential between certified and non-certified will become sufficiently large to induce the public to use non-certified practitioners. In technical terms, the elasticity of demand for the services of certified practitioners will be fairly large, and the limits within which they can exploit the rest of the public by taking advantage of their special position will be rather narrow....

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Let People Work K-W-L Chart

Directions: Complete the **K** and **W** sections prior to watching the video. After you have seen the video, complete the **L** section and answer the two questions below the K-W-L chart.

K	W	L
What I know about occupational licensing:	What I want to know about occupational licensing:	What I've learned about occupational licensing:

After watching the video and discussing it in class, what do you think about occupational licensing laws and opportunities for ex-cons to rehabilitate themselves? _____

Why? _____
