

# The Crime of a Commercial Exchange

*Editor's Pick. Written by Connor Boyack.*

When Jestina Clayton was threatened with legal action for braiding hair, bureaucrats made clear that her supposed crime was that she had been braiding hair for pay. Think about that for a moment: it was legal for her to braid hair for free, but as soon as money became involved, she was being required to spend 2,000 hours in cosmetology school, seek the state's permission, pay fees, and meet other requirements.

Why does the exchange of a few dollars in this simple transaction make an otherwise legal action illegal?

Of course, this is not an issue only in regards to hair braiding. Most occupational licenses involve a form of labor that can freely be done without pay, but which becomes criminalized when money is involved—unless the government has, with issuance of a license, given its blessing.

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