

# The Bristol Press

## Does the license requirement really protect the public?

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According to the Cato Institute's Doug Bandow, more than 1,100 professions in the United States demand licensure. In 1950, he writes, five percent of Americans "needed official permission to work."

Today, "nearly a quarter require some form of government approval."

Bandow cites examples — like 150 hours of classes to become a "Shampoo Specialist" — to support an obvious conclusion — "Licensing is an extraordinary scam."

An obvious downside to this is, as a study by the Obama Administration found, is that "licensing increases prices" on consumers "on average, as much as 16 percent."

Worse (since we just observed Labor Day), "Government restrictions on employment are particularly counterproductive at a time of high unemployment," Bandow writes. "By one estimate licensure destroys nearly three million jobs. Overall, licensing has been estimated to cost \$100 billion to \$200 billion a year."

The idea behind licensing, of course, is to protect the public. But the Obama report (for a whole host of reasons) found "most research does not find that licensing improves quality or public health and safety."

Bandow argues, and we agree, that the right idea is to "end most regulation, instead relying on market mechanisms for consumer protection."

As he puts it, "In the 'land of the free' people shouldn't have to get anyone else's permission to work."