

## Dave Oliveria

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**From:** Wayne Hoffman [wayne@idahofreedom.net]  
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**To:** Wayne Hoffman  
**Subject:** column

Government regs keep people from economic opportunity

By Wayne Hoffman

Mattel makes a line of Barbie dolls under the moniker of "I can be ..."  
in which Barbie shows she can be in any profession she wants: doctor, a teacher, a  
computer tech and a variety of other occupations. Ah, but Barbie has never had to confront  
an occupational licensing board.  
Sorry, Barbie.

If Barbie were a car wash attendant or a waitress or newspaper delivery person or a  
grocery store clerk, she would have a tough time finding a new career that might pay more  
money and raise her standard of living. And that's true even in Idaho, where we are  
assured that regulatory barriers are few and far between.

The Institute for Justice recently examined the issue of occupational licensing in all 50  
states, asking, "What are the government's requirements to work in a particular field?" IJ  
found that Idaho ranks 36th when it comes occupational licensing burdens.

"In the 1950s, only one in 20 U.S. workers needed the government's permission to pursue  
their chosen occupation. Today, that figure stands at almost one in three," the institute  
reported.  
Such licenses make it "harder for people to find jobs and build new businesses that create  
jobs, particularly minorities, those of lesser means and those with less education."

So let's go back to Barbie, who dreams of a big pink mansion, a convertible and Ken. She  
works as a pizza chef (part of the 2010 Barbie I Can Be series) and wants a higher  
standard of living.

She decides she wants to open up a nail salon. Good for her. Mattel already offers the  
Barbie Doll'd Up Nails Digital Printer, allowing Barbie to dazzle up her customers' nails.  
If Barbie were a resident of Alaska, she could be a manicurist in three days. Here in  
Idaho, she'll need 93 days of training.

Perhaps she can be a hair stylist? Nope. Cosmetologists in Idaho need  
467 days training. The national average is 372 days.  
How about a barber? Nope. It takes 630 days of training to be a licensed barber in Idaho.

Can she install or repair air conditioners? Well, sure, if she has about four years to  
spare for training and, of course, the money to pay for it, which she may not. She'll  
encounter the same barriers if she wants to install fire or security alarms.

Barbie is so disappointed and depressed. A better life is elusive.  
She's stuck in the middle class, and she resents how the wealthy keeps getting wealthier  
while she seems to be losing ground economically.

She's fired from her job as a pizza chef.

How many professions will be off-limits to her because she lacks the training and  
experience and licensing to be in that profession? In Idaho, the number is 47. Soon, the  
number will be 48, because the Legislature and the governor saw fit to add massage  
therapists to the list of professions requiring licensure.

Politicians talk all the time about how they will, once elected, help create jobs. And all  
they really do is make it harder to get a job and deny ordinary hardworking people access  
to the free market and the American Dream.

Barbie teaches our kids they can be whatever they want to be. The government teaches them they can't.

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Wayne

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"Restoring Liberty, Improving Lives"

The Idaho Freedom Foundation (IFF) is a non-partisan educational research institute and government watchdog dedicated to improving the lives of Idahoans. IFF advocates for free market solutions, private property rights, individual responsibility and transparent, limited government. IFF develops and distributes original research and data with the goal of restoring our state and nation as beacons of opportunity and prosperity. : Support IFF!

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