



Senate Bill 13, An Act Expanding Economic Opportunity in Licensed Occupations
General Law Committee
March 5, 2020

The Associated Sheet Metal & Roofing Contractors of Connecticut (ASMRCC) is an association of commercial, industrial and residential sheet metal contractors employing the skilled craftsmen of Locals #40 and #38 of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers International Union and also Locals #9 and #12 of the United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, and Allied Workers. ASMRCC seeks to provide services that will enhance members' businesses, markets and profitability in all sectors of the sheet metal, HVAC, and roofing industry in Connecticut and vicinity.

ASMRCC is **opposed** to Senate Bill 13 and respectfully requests that the committee not act on the bill. Senate Bill 13 would enroll more people into apprenticeship programs without a commitment to workforce development or clear path to completion. The bill does not put enough emphasis on safety training. It would undermine the purpose of occupational licensing and the intent of construction industry apprenticeship training programs in Connecticut.

State policy has emphasized construction safety training, occupational licensing and support for apprenticeship programs. SB 13 would represent a step backward in all three areas, undermining the policy lawmakers and the industry have strived so hard to achieve over the years.

Senate Bill 13 allows (1) a registered apprenticeship sponsor to hire one preapprentice and one last-year apprentice, provided they have a last year apprentice ID card; (2) continuing or classroom education prior to receiving an occupational license to be completed online or remotely; and (3) any occupational license holder in any state who has held the license for two years to take Connecticut's licensing exam.

The sheet metal and roofing contractor industry enthusiastically supports registered apprenticeship programs. ASMRCC members successfully train participants to develop the next generation of workers. However, there must be a commitment to ensuring that apprentices complete their apprenticeship programs and become a journeyman or licensed technician in their chosen field.

Allowing contractors to hire preapprentices, where there is no commitment to providing appropriate on the job training and oversight, as well as a clear path to program completion, is missing the intent of Connecticut's registered apprenticeship standards and would cause undue safety risks.

Allowing classroom instruction to be conducted remotely or online could pose risks for the construction trades. Nearly all classroom training includes some hands-on, practical instruction. While section 4 of the bill excludes hands-on training, it is very difficult for instructors or apprentice coordinators to indicate which sections of their curriculum could be done remotely or in the classroom.

Section 8 of the bill would allow any occupational license holder in any state in the country who has held the license for two consecutive years to come to Connecticut and sit for a licensing exam here. This would undermine Connecticut's occupational licensing program and pose significant problems for the construction industry. Construction industry jobs are very dangerous despite training and instruction for workers. Strong licensing standards under Connecticut's law helps determine qualified persons who can sit for examinations here and keep workers and the public safe.

Please contact Michael Thompson, Executive Director of ASMRCC, at (860) 413-9447, for additional information or any questions.