

Testimony of Larry Vallieres

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Independent Electrical Contractors of New England

Senate Bill 13

General Law Committee

Public Hearing March 5, 2020

Good afternoon Senator Maroney, Senator Witkos, Representative D'Agostino, Representative Cheeseman and members of the General Law Committee. My name is Larry Vallieres and I am testifying today on behalf of the Independent Electrical Contractors as their government relations chairman. I also am the chairman of the State Electrical Work Examining Board, a member of the State Apprenticeship Council, and member of the ratio review subcommittee as well as an appointed member of the ratio working group that was legislated under Public Act 17-76. I also have been an electrical contractor in the State of Connecticut since 1972. I would like to offer the following comments and recommendations concerning Senate Bill 13 for your consideration

Section 1: We total support "on-line" renewal for our occupational licenses.

Section 2 (NEW) (d): We believe that we understand the intent of this newly added language, which appears to go hand in hand with Section 3 (b) however; we believe that Section 3(b) should be more clearly stated.

Section 3: Section 3(a) of this bill which is relative to Section 20-332b of the general statutes addresses what is referred to as the "hiring ratio" for six specific occupational trades. I know of no other occupations within our state that has any such restriction on the development of their workforce. Not only is this restrictive from an employment prospective, but it also severely restricts the replenishment of an aging workforce and prohibits the opportunity to meet the work site ratio of one full time licensee instructing and supervising the work of one apprentice. There is a four year cycle of training to replenish each licensee who retires or leaves the trade for one reason or another. We believe that the "hiring ratio" as stipulated continues to be a complete barrier to the development of our workforce and the Governors initiative for workforce development.

Section 3(b): We believe that this section should be more clearly stated. As currently written we believe it to create a false feeling of value to that last year apprentice and possibly develop into competitiveness for a last year apprentice. Our suggested language is the following of which we would support.

(b) In addition to the registered apprentices permitted under the allowable hiring ratios regarding apprentices specified in subsection (a) of this section, *a registered apprenticeship sponsor who has employed a last year apprentice for at least one year prior to that apprentice receiving his or her last year identification card may register an additional apprentice for each last year apprentice that holds such identification card provided that such last year apprentice remains in the employ of said sponsor, and* (2) one preapprentice, as defined in subparagraph (D) of

subdivision (4) of subsection (c) of section 31-23. Regardless of any established hiring ratio, the work site ratio shall not be less than one full-time licensee instructing and supervising the work of each apprentice in a specific trade.

Section 4: We do not agree that training for all occupations, neither pre-license or for continued education can be effectively administered and received via Internet or distance learning means of delivering such education. While this may be acceptable as an example for accounting or real estate, it is not effective for all occupations, particularly those in the construction trades of which are far more technically orientated and hands on. We would suggest and support that the following language or its equivalent be inserted in this propose Section 4 after ("Internet and distance learning", subject to the program being review by the subject matter experts of the appropriate occupational board, and with their recommendation to the Commissioner.)

Section 5: We take no exception to and support as presented.

Section 6 (NEW): We take no exception to and support as presented.

Section 7: In general we take no exception to the intent, however we do believe that under the new paragraph (c) that the following language should be added: (subject to section 46a-80, with the advise and recommendation of the appropriate occupational board, may deny a license or may issue a license pursuant). This would allow input from the subject matter experts of the particular occupation so that the Commissioner has added input for consideration as it relates to the particular occupation.

Section 8 (NEW): We support the intent of this section of the bill and would like to offer the following suggestions. As used many times in this proposed section, the terms license, permit, certification and registration are too broad of terms in regards to occupational licenses. There are states, counties and boroughs outside of Connecticut that issue permits, certifications and registrations that are interpreted as licenses to people who have had no formal training or education in these occupational trades. Since our occupational trades are "licensed trades" there needs to be more clarity in regards to the interpretation of what we would consider to be equal to another state. All such applications submitted for approval should be forward to the appropriate occupational board as the experts for their review of the applicant's equivalent experience and training. Such board should then make their recommendations to the Commissioner of that Department.

We do believe that the "residency" requirement is a good requirement as this will limit or eliminate people from bordering states crossing state lines and absorbing work from Connecticut professionals and not contributing to the state's economy or employment tax rolls.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and should you need to be in contact with me you can do so by email at: larry@ecs-ct.com or by cell phone at 860-869-0560. I look forward to continuing to be of service.