

GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING FEBRUARY 23, 2021

Representative D'Agostino, Senator Maroney, Representative Rutigliano, Senator Witkos and members of this committee, my name is Cameron Champlin, I represent Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 777. Local 777 is comprised of approximately 3500 men and women that live and work in Connecticut. I am also a member of the State of Connecticut Heating and Cooling Licensing Board.

This testimony is in opposition to HB - 6445. This bill would allow anyone applying for licensure in Connecticut to circumvent our present system of ensuring the safety of our citizens. The State of Connecticut Apprenticeship Programs are second to none in the United States, why would anyone want to grant a person that doesn't reside in Connecticut an avenue for obtaining a license that requires less time in that occupation than we require of our apprentices for that same occupation? Our apprenticeship programs have varying amounts of years to complete depending on what type of license they are being mentored for. Upon completion of an apprenticeship program the apprentice is required to successfully pass the licensing test for that occupation. That requirement ensures that an applicant has the knowledge to safely and adequately perform the tasks that the license allows for. This bill would grant anyone from another area to be issued a license without successfully passing our exam to determine if he or she is qualified to install and service systems in Connecticut. Not only is this a deterrent to our DOL Registered Apprentice Programs it also takes away the assurance that our citizens are hiring qualified licensed personnel to install and repair systems safely and professionally. Would you want someone to work in your home on your oil or gas fired boiler that hasn't proven that they are qualified to perform that task.

In 2018 in Massachusetts there was a mistake made by Columbia Gas resulting in dozens of homes exploding. One person died and ten were injured in that incident. Considering the number of homes involved it is miraculous that there were not more injuries or deaths. In 2020 at the Veterans Hospital in West Haven there was another explosion, this one from high pressure steam. Two people died in that accident, one was a pipe fitter from my local union, the other was a maintenance personnel employee of the hospital. Because he was employed by a Government owned property the maintenance person was exempt from licensing in Connecticut. When he opened the steam valve it was opened too quickly causing the steam to contact the cold condensate in a repaired pipe and exploded. Mistakes can always occur but let's not add to the danger by not ensuring that people working in this state are qualified to perform the tasks allowed by our licensing laws. If they don't successfully pass our examination for licensing we have no way of knowing if they are qualified. Why would we want to grant residents from another area less requirements for licensing than our own residents who have completed a State of Connecticut Registered Apprenticeship Program?

If a person from another area applies for one of our occupational licenses his application is reviewed by a person from the appropriate licensing board, a person from the DCP and a person from the DOL. Any qualification he or she has acquired in another area is considered by that group and that person is allowed to take the appropriate licensing test. We believe this process is fair and equitable for the applicant and our citizens to ensure

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the person applying can engage in the tasks allowed by that license and can perform them with confidence and knowledge for our citizens.

The other factor that has to be considered is the different codes and requirements in different states. Someone from a warm climate installs systems differently than here in Connecticut. A prime example of that is what is happening in Texas right now with the extremely cold weather that is normally not an issue there.

For these reasons we ask that you vote to not move this bill forward. If it does move on we ask that you exempt the Occupational Licenses for Construction from the bill. If there is anymore information required from me please contact me at camc@att.net or my cell (860) 287-0020.

Respectfully submitted, Cameron Champlin