



Founded 1889

UNITED ASSOCIATION

of Journeymen and Apprentices of the
Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of
the United States and Canada

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***RE: HB 6445-An Act Expanding Economic Opportunity
in Occupations Licensed by the Department of Consumer Protection***

General Law Committee
Public Hearing

February 23, 2021

Dear Chairman D’Agostino, Chairman Maroney, Ranking Member Witkos, Ranking Member Rutigliano and all members of the General Law Committee,

My name is John Higgins Jr. I am a Business Agent for UA Local 777 Plumbers and Pipefitters. I have been in the Plumbing and Pipefitting industry for 39 years. I am a licensed unlimited Journeyman Plumber who possesses a P-2. I am a licensed unlimited Journeyman Pipefitter who possess an S-2. I have been a proud member of the State of CT Heating and Cooling work examining board since 2009. I also sit on the Joint Apprentice Training Committee for Local 777 Plumbers and Pipefitters of CT.

I am submitting testimony in **strong opposition to HB 6445**, “*An Act Expanding Economic Opportunity in Occupations Licensed by the Department of Consumer Protection.*” I believe this bill will have unintended consequences. This bill will result in potential damage and or injuries to the consumer, installer and or end user. This bill will be a dilution of the CT Apprenticeship, CT Occupational licensing, workplace standards and CT construction safety standards.

The construction industry has means, methods, codes and standards that vary from state to state. It varies largely region by region due to climate and codes. Plumbing and Pipefitting in CT has standards and codes that adhere to building design and methods that pertain to this region.

Plumbing and Pipefitting is not the same in CT as it would be in Florida. Principals and theories may be along the same lines, but installation and codes are significantly different. A plumber or pipefitter from a southern region will not be familiar with our codes on climate. For instance, in CT we are subject to freezing temperatures above ground and below ground. Many piping systems are installed below the ground. In CT we have a frost line of 42” whereas Florida or Texas will not have this standard. Our soil is significantly different, CT is prone to rock, ledge and clay. Piping systems installed in these various soil types require certain installation practices that would not be required in the soft sand of Florida. Plumbing and heating system installations vary significantly inside residents’ homes and buildings. In CT all domestic water pipe and heating pipes installed above ground are installed in such a manner to avoid freezing temperatures. In a warmer climate this is not a thought nor an issue. The means and methods of installing these systems by regional standards are to avoid catastrophic disasters.

Unfortunately, Texas is feeling the effects of Potable water and Heating systems that are not designed, installed or intended to be installed in a freezing climate. Unfortunately, **HB 6445** will allow someone from another region of the USA, who is unfamiliar with our area practice and standards, come to CT and receive an occupational license based on credentials and not

education or experience in the appropriate state. This is a detrimental mistake and will result in catastrophic ramifications.

CT has an incredible apprenticeship program and the most well educated and safety conscious construction workers in the country. Our skilled tradesman and women in CT continually educate themselves through continuing education on a bi-yearly basis and update their safety training by OSHA every 5 years. Why would such a bill be proposed to erode the standards and quality of skilled tradesman and women who are the middle-class blue-collar workers? These men and women are our residents and your constituents! This bill proposed by our Governor, HB 6445 is a blatant attack on the CT Apprenticeship, CT Occupational Licensing, CT Safety Standards. This bill is a disservice to the consumers and end users of CT. **HB 6445** is a slap in the face to the skilled tradesman and women in CT. **I ask you today to please join me in opposing HB 6445.**

I thank the Chairs, Ranking members, and distinguished members of the General Law Committee for your time and consideration. In the meantime, should you have any questions or if you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me by email at jhiggins@local777.com or by phone to 203-623-1129.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Higgins Jr.", is written over the typed name.

John Higgins Jr.