

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2500

As Reported by House Committee On: Labor & Workforce Development

Title: An act relating to requiring completion of an apprenticeship program to receive a journeyman or residential specialty electrician certificate of competency.

Brief Description: Requiring completion of an apprenticeship program to receive a journeyman or residential specialty electrician certificate of competency.

Sponsors: Representatives Reykdal, Tarleton, Sells, Ormsby, Fitzgibbon, Morrell, Roberts and Riccelli.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workforce Development: 1/23/14, 1/24/14 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires completion of an apprenticeship program to obtain a journey level or residential specialty electrician certificate beginning July 1, 2019.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Green, Moeller and Ormsby.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Christian and G. Hunt.

Staff: Joan Elgee (786-7106).

Background:

An electrical contractor license is required to engage in the business of installing or maintaining wires or equipment to convey electric current, or equipment to be operated by

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electric current. To work as an electrician, an individual must have a journey level (01) or specialty electrician certificate of competency. The specialties include residential (02), and multiple other specialties.

To be certified as a journey level electrician, an individual must work in the electrical construction trade for at least 8,000 hours to take the required examination. For the residential specialty certificate, the applicant must work in the specialty for at least 4,000 hours to take the examination.

An applicant for a journey level or any of the electrical specialty certificates may alternatively complete an apprenticeship program approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council.

An applicant who has completed a two-year program at a community or technical college or technical or trade school may substitute up to two years of the school program for two years of work experience. Training in the electrical construction trade in the military may also be credited as work experience.

To obtain the necessary work experience to become a journey level or specialty electrician, persons must obtain an electrical training certificate, and in general, trainees must work under the supervision of a journey level or the appropriate specialty electrician.

The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) issues licenses and certificates of competency and otherwise administers the regulation of electricians and electrical work.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Beginning July 1, 2019, applicants for a journey level (01) or residential specialty (02) electrician certificate of competency must complete an apprenticeship program to take the examination. The applicant must have worked under supervision for a minimum of 8,000 hours for the journey level certificate or 4,000 hours for the residential specialty certificate.

Applicants may substitute a school program or military experience for the work experience required under an apprenticeship program. Trainees must be either in an apprenticeship program, learning a specialty other than residential, or learning the trade in a school program. Journey level and residential specialty trainees must have in their possession proof of apprenticeship or training program registration and must show these documents to a representative of the Department upon request.

Until July 1, 2021, the Department may permit an applicant who obtained experience and training equivalent to an apprenticeship program to take the journey level or residential specialty examination, as appropriate, if the applicant demonstrates good cause for not completing the required minimum hours of work before the new apprenticeship requirements took effect.

Obsolete language in several statutes is deleted and obsolete terminology is updated.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds the requirement that journey level and residential specialty trainees must have proof of apprenticeship or training program registration in their possession and show these documents to the Department upon request. Clarification is added that unless a trainee is working in a specialty other than residential, he or she must be registered in an apprentice or school program. Other clarifying changes are made. Obsolete terminology is updated and other technical changes are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Apprenticeship programs are the best route because they give people the skills to be employable and safe. Apprentices are more likely to pass the exam the first time.

This is a safety bill. Last year over 200 construction workers were killed by electrocution. Every worker deserves to have the best training possible. The bill is limited to those with the highest exposure; these workers should get the best training possible.

By making Washington have the same requirements as Idaho and Oregon, we will have a better regional economy. Washington does not have reciprocity with Oregon and Idaho now.

The bill is sensitive to the existing system. It applies only to 01s and 02s and not to any of the other specialties. There is a long implementation period.

Apprentice programs are not hard to implement and there are nonunion programs in eastern Washington.

(Opposed) To limit to one system is wrong. There should be a choice. Apprentice programs are not better than any other program. The bill is unfair to those who want a nonunion option through the training route. Persons who train electricians have a vested interest in those they train.

This bill is anti-small business and not a way to get new jobs. It is hard for small businesses to establish an apprentice program. Programs have been taken over by labor unions. Apprentice programs limit entry.

There is an electrician shortage and this bill would restrict the supply so that the cost to homeowners will be higher.

The long ramp up is a smoke screen. Look at the impact on the market. Nonunion apprenticeship programs in eastern Washington are not known.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Reykdal, prime sponsor; Nicole Grant, Certified Electrical Workers of Washington; David Meyers, Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council; Sean Bagsby, Paul Riggs, Gary Young and Terry Reigle, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 46; and Tony Lewis, Southwest Washington Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee.

(Opposed) Max Johnston; Michael Curley, Washington State Electrical Contractor Association; and Gary Smith, Independent Business Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.