

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1510

As Reported By House Committee On:

Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to expanding membership of the electrical board by appointment of one outside line worker.

Brief Description: Expanding membership of the electrical board by appointment of one outside line worker.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, Scott, Cooper, Anderson, Boldt, Quall and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 2/10/99, 2/23/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- The membership of the electrical board is increased from ten to 11 members with the addition of an outside line worker.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Clements, Republican Co-Chair; Conway, Democratic Co-Chair; B. Chandler, Republican Vice Chair; Wood, Democratic Vice Chair; Hurst; Lisk; McIntire and McMorris.

Staff: Douglas Ruth (786-7134).

Background:

The Department of Labor and Industries regulates the installation and repair and maintenance of electrical wires and equipment. The department is helped in its regulatory functions by the Electrical Board. The 10-member board consists of:

- An electrical utility employee;
- Three licensed electrical contractors, one of whom may represent an electrical trade association;
- A manufacturer of electrical materials;

- Three certified electricians;
- A professional electrical engineer; and
- A representative of the public with knowledge of the electrical industry.

The Chief Electrical Inspector is secretary to the board. Members of the board are appointed by the Governor with the advice of the director of the Department of Labor and Industries. They serve for four-year terms.

The board advises the director of the Department of Labor and Industries on the regulation of electricians and electrical installations. The board makes recommendations to the director on the issuance or repeal of rules. It is also the final authority for appeals of citations and license revocations or suspensions.

The department and the board license and certify electricians, and permit and inspect electrical work. This regulatory authority does not apply to work performed by utilities. The electrical statute specifically exempts the installation, repair, or maintenance of lines, wires, apparatus, or equipment used in the lighting of streets, alleys, ways, or public areas or squares, or used to transmit electricity to customers. The workers that perform this type of work for utilities are known as outside line workers.

Summary of Bill:

The membership of the Electrical Board is increased from 10 to 11 members. The Governor appoints an outside line worker to fill the added seat on the board. The term for the new member is the same as for other board members, four years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 1999.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The electrical industry is changing. The distinction between "outside" electrical work and "inside" electrical work is growing finer. Many members of the outside lineman's local, are signatories of the local for "inside" electricians. More and more there is interaction between the electricians that perform these two categories of work. As a result, electricians are having increasing difficulty determining which category of electricians are responsible for performing certain work. The board's composition should change to meet the change in the industry. The board needs an outside lineman to help decide these issues. An outside lineman

should be on the board also because utilities are already represented on the board. There needs to be a corresponding labor representative to keep the board balanced.

(With amendments) One segment of the industry that is not represented on the board is the small electrical contractors. If an outside line worker is added to the board, a corresponding electrical contractor with less than fifteen employees should be added. This would preserve the balance of the board.

Testimony Against: Outside linemen are not electricians under the electrical statute. They are exempt from certification. So it is inappropriate to add them to the board which advises the department on regulating electricians, including certification of electrical administrators. Similarly, because the board is funded by fees from electricians, and the outside line workers do not pay these fees, it is inequitable to add an outside lineman to the membership. The addition imbalances the board. The board has been running smoothly for 20 years with the present membership; there is no need to add another representative.

Testified: (In favor) David Timothy, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers #77; and Richard King, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers #46.

(In favor, with amendments) Gary Smith, Independent Business Association.

(Opposed) Larry Stevens, National Electric Contractors Association.

(Neutral) Suzanne Mager, Department of Labor and Industries.