

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1841

As Passed House:

March 10, 2005

Title: An act relating to electrical trainees.

Brief Description: Revising provisions for electrical trainees.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Wood, Kenney, Conway, Strow, Sells, Simpson, Hasegawa and Santos).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 2/16/05, 2/23/05 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/10/05, 94-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires continuing education courses for renewal of electrical trainee certificates.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Condotta, Ranking Minority Member; Sump, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Crouse, Hudgins and McCoy.

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) administers electrical contracting and certification laws. These laws establish requirements for trainees to work in the electrical construction trade.

To work as a trainee in the electrical construction trade, a person must obtain an electrical training certificate. The trainee must renew the certificate biennially. When renewing the certificate, the trainee must provide the Department with a list of the trainee's employers during the previous biennial period and the number of hours worked for each employer.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The requirements for renewing trainee certificates are modified. As of July 1, 2006, in addition to the list of past employers and hours worked for those employers, a trainee must provide proof of 16 hours of certain course work. This course work includes continuing education courses covering national and state electrical codes or electrical theory, or equivalent courses taken as part of an approved apprenticeship or electrical training program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill is common sense legislation. Electrical installations are complex and dangerous. This is a first step towards a better-trained, and better-educated workforce.

Classroom training is already required for journeyman electricians, and should also be required for electrical trainees. Trainees have an extremely low pass rate between 10 and 12 percent when taking the exam to become certified as a journeyman electrician, and part of the exam is open book.

The job site supervision requirement is one of the most abused provisions in the law. First and second year trainees are the most vulnerable and the most in need of additional supervision. The changes to the job site supervision requirements are limited to commercial installations.

Testimony Against: (With concerns) There is no problem with the classroom training requirement. We are okay with the educational requirement.

A widespread problem with supervision has not been established. There is no demonstrated need for this bill. This issue should be addressed in collective bargaining.

Most electrical contractors have less than five employees. This bill, if passed as is, would hurt small electrical contractors.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Mike Grunwald, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local (IBEW) 76; Janet Lewis, IBEW Local 46; Bob Guenther, IBEW Local 77; and Richard King, IBEW.

(With concerns) Larry Turner, Alpha Omega Electric; Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Association, Gary Smith, Independent Business Association; and Rick Slunaker, Associated General Contractors.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.