

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1590

As Reported by House Committee On: Labor

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

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

Sponsors: Representatives Reykdal, Haler, Dunshee, Ryu, Van De Wege, Ormsby, Fitzgibbon, Riccelli, Blake, Tarleton, McBride, Wylie and Goodman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor: 2/2/15, 2/9/15, 2/10/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires completion of an apprenticeship program to obtain a journey level or residential specialty electrician certificate beginning July 1, 2020.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Moeller and Ormsby.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; G. Hunt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCabe.

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 electric current. To work as an electrician, an individual must have a journey level (01) or

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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 (02) 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 Bill:

Beginning July 1, 2020, 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, 2022, 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 take effect.

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2020.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is part of the larger idea of more support for apprenticeship programs as an alternative pathway to attending a university. Supporting apprenticeships tells students we want you to be successful in high wage jobs. Currently, only about half the applicants go through an apprenticeship program. In contrast, apprenticeship is the training mode in Oregon and Idaho. Oregon does not allow reciprocal licensing because apprenticeships are not required in Washington. This bill will make it easier for electricians in border areas and help create a trans-state workforce. Apprenticeships are the safest and most effective way to be trained in this dangerous profession. The bill will protect both workers and the public. Apprentices receive over 1,800 hours of monitored and diverse training. There is a shortage of workers and the average age is about 40. It's very easy to become an apprenticeship provider and put family members through the program. Apprenticeships are industry-funded. Both union and non-union apprenticeship programs support this bill.

(In support with amendment) School employees who do plant and machine maintenance electrical cannot use their experience to sit for a specialty exam because of a quirk in the law. Language was worked on and it should be added.

(Opposed) It's too limiting to have apprenticeship be the only option. It's common for people to train their family members. Some electrical contractors are concerned.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Reykdal, prime sponsor; Nicole Grant, Certified Electrical Workers of Washington; Halene Sigmund, Construction Industry Training Council of Washington; William McCarthin, Puget Sound Electrical JATC; Randy Ambuehl, Northwest Washington Electrician Joint Apprenticeship Training Council; and Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Association.

(In support with amendment) David Westberg, IUOE Local 609.

(Opposed) Gary Smith, Independent Business Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.