

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5281

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, January 30, 2015

Title: An act relating to nonresidential security system electricians.

Brief Description: Creating a nonresidential security system specialty electrician certificate.

Sponsors: Senators Braun, Baumgartner and Warnick.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 1/26/15, 1/30/15 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Baumgartner, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair; King and Warnick.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hasegawa, Ranking Minority Member; Conway and Keiser.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) has responsibility for permitting and inspecting new and altered electrical systems in all types of installations throughout the state. L&I also administers the electrical certification laws, and anyone seeking to engage in the business of doing electrical work must have an electrical contractor license, and anyone who works in the electrical construction trade must be certified as a journeyman or specialty electrician.

Specialty electrician certificates allow individuals to perform limited scopes of electrical work and require 2000 to 4000 hours of work experience as a prerequisite to certification.

Summary of Bill: L&I must establish a nonresidential security system specialty electrician certificate. The scope of work for the specialty involves the installation, maintenance, and repair of security systems in nonresidential structures and commercial units within multistory structures containing both commercial and residential units.

Appropriation: None.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: These are outdated laws that are making it difficult for security companies to hire additional employees to do the sort of work covered by the legislation. The bill would recognize the alarm industry as its own specialized field. Much of the work performed by security installers does not need to be performed by a licensed electrician, as most of the systems are plug and play that require very little wiring. The components are low voltage and need not be performed by trained and certified electricians.

CON: Electrical installations should be done in a way that is safe for the workers and for the public. The electrical industry is serious about electrical installations and electrical work. Care should be exercised when allowing individuals who aren't electricians to go into walls with existing wires and install new components. Wireless systems are already exempt, and this is unnecessary legislation.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Braun, prime sponsor; David Westberg, International Union of Operating Engineers-Local 609 AFL-CIO; Amy Brackenbury, Tim Nickols, ADT Security.

CON: Nicole Grant, Executive Director, Certified Electrical Workers of WA; Clint Bryson, Business Representative, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 76; Wendy Brown, IBEW 46; Lee Newgent, Executive Secretary, WA State Building and Construction Trades Council; Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Assn.