

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6126

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Labor & Commerce, January 15, 2018

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

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

Sponsors: Senators Saldaña, Hasegawa, Chase, Conway, Zeiger, Keiser and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Commerce: 1/11/18, 1/15/18 [DPS, DNP].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Requires completion of an apprenticeship program to receive a journey level electrician certificate of competency.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6126 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Hasegawa, Vice Chair; Conway, King, Kuderer and Saldaña.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Braun and Wilson.

Staff: Jarrett Sacks (786-7448)

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 specialty electrician certificate of competency.

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.

To obtain certification as a journey level electrician, an individual must work in the electrical construction trade for at least 8000 hours to take the required examination. Alternatively, an applicant may 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 a 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 armed services may also be credited as work experience.

To obtain the necessary work experience to become a journey level electrician, an individual must obtain an electrical trainee certificate, and, in general, trainees must work under the supervision of a journey level electrician.

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

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): Applicants for a journey level (01) electrician certificate of competency must complete an apprenticeship program to take the examination. The applicant must have worked under supervision for a minimum of 8000 hours. The holder of a specialty electrician certificate of competency with 4000 hours of work experience can credit the work experience toward the apprenticeship program work requirements. Applicants may substitute a school program or armed services experience for the work experience required under an apprenticeship program.

Until 2023, L&I may permit an applicant who obtained experience and training equivalent to a journey level apprenticeship program if the applicant has good cause for not completing the minimum hours of work.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY LABOR & COMMERCE COMMITTEE (First Substitute): A provision authorizing applicants to complete an equivalent apprenticeship program to be eligible for the examination is added. Expired provisions are removed. Provisions specifying that 4000 hours are transferable to an appropriate apprenticeship program are removed. Technical changes are made to specify that the bill only applies to journey level electricians. An expiration date for grandfathering in non-apprentice electricians is changed to 2025. An effective date of July 1, 2023, is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2023.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: There is a huge workforce demand that the bill helps alleviate. It will also help economic development on the state's border by helping Washington get reciprocity with Oregon. Apprentices have more success on exams.

Apprenticeships provide a more holistic training and improve safety. Trainees are not getting the same level of safety training.

CON: Current two-route method to certification works best and preserves the independence of contractors. The bill will limit access for people in rural communities to get certified. There is no public safety crisis that requires the change.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Rebecca Saldaña, Prime Sponsor; James King, Washington State HVAC Industry Association; Nicole Hite, Executive Director, Southwest Washington Chapter - National Electrical Contractors Association; Mike Doyle, President, Dannard Electric; Stephen Harper, Training Director, Southwest Washington Electrical Joint Apprenticeship; Halene Sigmund, CITC of Washington.

CON: Nathan Turner, WSECA; Michael Curley, WSECA.

OTHER: Tammy Fellin, Labor & Industries.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.