
SENATE BILL 5545

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Senators MacEwen, King, and Mullet

Read first time 01/24/23. Referred to Committee on Labor & Commerce.

1 AN ACT Relating to the requirements to obtain a journey level
2 electrician certificate of competency; amending RCW 19.28.195;
3 amending 2018 c 249 s 5 and 2020 c 153 ss 30 and 31 (uncodified);
4 creating new sections; providing effective dates; providing
5 expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the enactment
8 of Substitute Senate Bill No. 6126 (chapter 249, Laws of 2018) will
9 significantly shift the state's approach to certifying journey level
10 electricians. It will consolidate five education and training
11 pathways to a single pathway, requiring the completion of an
12 apprenticeship program for any person seeking certification as a
13 journey level electrician. This change was slated to go into effect
14 July 1, 2023, however, there are only 14 approved apprenticeship
15 programs for journey level electricians in the state. While the
16 department of labor and industries is unable to assess whether there
17 is sufficient capacity in those programs for all current trainees,
18 stakeholders estimate there are between 7,000 to 10,000 trainees
19 working towards journey level certification who are not enrolled in
20 an apprenticeship program. The legislature recognizes that
21 apprenticeship programs are not yet available in many rural areas of

1 the state, effectively requiring trainees residing in those areas to
2 travel up to four hours per day in order to participate in a program.
3 Therefore, the legislature intends to delay the effective date of the
4 single-pathway approach from July 1, 2023, to July 1, 2025, in order
5 to provide more time for additional apprenticeship programs to be
6 approved and for existing programs to be expanded to meet the demand
7 of trainees and their employers.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of labor and industries
9 shall conduct a study on the availability and accessibility of
10 journey level electrical apprenticeship programs, including
11 determining:

12 (a) The number and geographic locations of the programs and if
13 they are union affiliated, nonunion affiliated with open enrollment,
14 or single employer programs;

15 (b) The number and geographic locations of trainees currently
16 enrolled in the programs;

17 (c) The number and geographic locations of trainees currently
18 working towards qualifying for certification who are not yet enrolled
19 in a program but who will need to enroll in a program in order to
20 comply with the certification requirements of Substitute Senate Bill
21 No. 6126 (chapter 249, Laws of 2018) by July 1, 2025; and

22 (d) The number and geographic locations of employers of trainees
23 that will need to become registered training agents with a program in
24 order for their trainee employees to be enrolled in a program, taking
25 into account individual employer preferences to be a training agent
26 for a union affiliated or nonunion affiliated program.

27 (2) In conducting the study, the department of labor and
28 industries shall conduct a survey of current trainees and employers
29 of electrical contractors no later than September 1, 2023. The
30 department of labor and industries shall submit a report with its
31 findings to the governor and appropriate committees of the
32 legislature, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, by December 1, 2023.

33 **Sec. 3.** RCW 19.28.195 and 2018 c 249 s 4 are each amended to
34 read as follows:

35 (1) The department may permit an applicant who obtained
36 experience and training equivalent to a journey level apprenticeship
37 program to take the examination if the applicant establishes that the
38 applicant has the equivalent training and experience and demonstrates

1 good cause for not completing the required minimum hours of work
2 under standards applicable on July 1, ((2023)) 2025.

3 (2) This section expires July 1, ((2025)) 2027.

4 **Sec. 4.** 2018 c 249 s 5 (uncodified) is amended to read as
5 follows:

6 Sections 1 through 4 of this act take effect July 1, ((2023))
7 2025.

8 **Sec. 5.** 2020 c 153 s 30 (uncodified) is amended to read as
9 follows:

10 Section 25 of this act expires July 1, ((2023)) 2025.

11 **Sec. 6.** 2020 c 153 s 31 (uncodified) is amended to read as
12 follows:

13 Section 26 of this act takes effect July 1, ((2023)) 2025.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Section 3 of this act takes effect July 1,
15 2025.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Except for section 3 of this act, this act
17 is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace,
18 health, or safety, or support of the state government and its
19 existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

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