



**State of Connecticut**  
**DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

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**Testimony of the Division of Criminal Justice**

**In Support of**

**H.B. No. 6983 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ENFORCEMENT OF  
CERTAIN PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING  
CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION LAWS**

*Joint Committee on Judiciary*  
*February 5, 2007*

The Division of Criminal Justice supports H.B. No. 6983, An Act Concerning the Enforcement of Certain Professional and Occupational Licensing, Certification and Registration Laws. This legislation is required to balance the penalties for engaging in a professional or occupational trade without a license, with the penalties for engaging in home improvement contracting without registration. The Division of Criminal Justice supports this proposal, which is an initiative of the Department of Consumer Protection, as it will allow prosecution of these serious trade practice violations as criminal matters...

Currently, the Department of Consumer Protection licenses a wide variety of trades. Licensing for a professional or occupational trade such as an electrician requires successful completion of an accredited school, job experience and strict examination on the subject trade, along with continuing education requirements; all aimed to ensure the competence of the applicant to correctly and safely perform work in the trade. The standards for trade licensing are justifiably high because incompetence in the trades can be a risk to persons or property. For example, electrocution is an inherent danger in any improperly performed electrical work. Carbon monoxide poisoning can result from improperly performed plumbing and heating work. Professional and occupational trade licensing is the means through which the Department of Consumer Protection watchguards the people of Connecticut from such risks.

Akin to the trade license program is the Department of Consumer Protection's home improvement contractor registration program. This program requires that a contractor register before performing any work covered under the home improvement contractor statutes. Registration does not require the accredited schooling, job experience or successful entrance examination that trade licensing requires. It is primarily a tracking

program to ensure certain consumer protections, rather than standards of competency, in the home improvement contractor business, and in that way operates to protect our citizens.

Even though the requirements for professional and occupational trade licensing are obviously more stringent than those for home improvement contractor registration, the penalty section for violation of the home improvement contractor registration requirement is much stronger. The penalty for engaging in unregistered home improvement work is a class B misdemeanor pursuant to CGS Section 20-427. The penalty for engaging in unlicensed professional or occupational trades is a mere \$200 fine (non-misdemeanor) pursuant to CGS 20-341(a). Professional and occupational licensing violations should carry a penalty commensurate with the offense. Setting a penalty at least equal to the home improvement contractor registration penalty will make a statement to the unlicensed contractors in the State of Connecticut that we demand the competence of our professional and occupational trades, assured through the licensing program of the Department of Consumer Protection. H.B. No. 6983 sets such a statement.

In closing, the Division of Criminal Justice supports House Bill No. 6983 and would be pleased to provide any additional information or answer any questions the Committee may have.