



TESTIMONY
BRIAN PHINNEY
CT PLUMBING, HEATING & COOLING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
MARCH 16, 2009

The Connecticut Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors Association (CT-PHCC) *opposes* HB-6375, An Act Eliminating Certain Boards and Commissions.

As professionals in the skilled trades, we oppose this bill, which will eliminate the Plumbing, & Piping Work Examining Board which has played a critical role in vigorously enforcing the state's occupational licensing laws.

While the state has taken several steps to enhance occupational licensing enforcement, we need to continue to support the role of the licensing board which has helped deter contractors from operating in Connecticut without the proper licenses and apprenticeship registrations.

Allowing unlicensed contractors to operate in Connecticut hurts our entire industry by exposing workers and consumers to potentially unsafe situations. Employees, who should have been given credit for hours on the job, are unfairly penalized by unscrupulous contractors who fail to register apprentices. This has to end.

Unfortunately, HB-6375 would eliminate the board that is in the best position to provide strong enforcement of the state's licensing laws. The state Department of Consumer Protection does not have the time or resources to ensure the continued enforcement of these laws.

Moreover, because the boards are comprised of union and open shop contractors in addition to members of the public, they provide a balanced mechanism for addressing enforcement issues in a consistent manner. Allowing these diverse interests to address enforcement issues with one voice has been important to advancing the professionalism of our industry.

The board also plays a critical role in reviewing requests for new limited licenses, which requires the expertise of people working in the industry to ensure that the scope and requirements of the license are designed to protect the safety of the state's consumers. In addition, the board sets forth the requirements for continuing education, which has proven beneficial in ensuring that all license holders understand changes in building codes, technologies, safety laws and other regulations affecting the industry. Without the work of these volunteer board members, the state would have to incur considerable expense in developing the expertise necessary to make sound decisions affecting the plumbing industry.

CT-PHCC is a not-for-profit trade association that represents the professional plumbing, heating and cooling contractors in the state of Connecticut. CT-PHCC and its members are committed to protecting the health and safety of the public. Contractors who belong to the association have demonstrated reliability and trustworthiness and are licensed by the state of Connecticut.