

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2009 – LOB ROOM 1A 11:30 A.M.**

SB 1035 – An Act Concerning Equal Access to Opportunities for Subcontractors

Testimony presented by: Joyce A. Wojtas, representing the Mechanical Contractors Association of Connecticut (MCAC)

Position: Opposed

The Mechanical Contractors is opposed to the changes in this bill which eliminates the requirement that subcontractors on state and municipal construction projects must be prequalified with the State Department of Administrative Services in order to work on building construction projects of \$500,000 or more and also eliminates the requirement that the subcontractors post a payment bond on a contract of \$100,000 or more if the general contractor posts the bond.

How soon we forget!!!!!!! How soon we forget all that problems that arose in the late 1990's and early 2000's with both state and municipal building construction projects with both general contractors and subcontractors. In addition to shoddy work and inferior materials in some school construction projects, workers were not paid, pension benefits were not paid and the lives of students were in jeopardy because in Connecticut, we did not have a system that did some checking on the people who were bidding on our projects. A contractor or subcontractor had serious problems in another state and could come into Connecticut and bid a job and get a contract.

It took years, but after a lot of hard work and the support of many construction organizations and trade unions, we finally got a bill passed. The prequalification law is a uniform system that helps keep unqualified contractors from getting state and municipal work. The law on the books is not perfect, however, and if anything, there has been talk of strengthening the law, not weakening it.

The majority of the states in this nation have a prequalification law. In our neighboring state of Massachusetts for instance, all contractors who want to bid on any contract of \$25,000 or more must be prequalified.

Prequalification is not a panacea, but it is a good start in ensuring that the taxpayers of this state are getting what they pay for. We cannot go back in our history and allow state and municipal construction projects be the training ground for contractors entering the business. There is other work out there, that is smaller in scope that allows someone to grow their business before we take chances with the taxpayers dollars.

Thank you for your time and your consideration in this matter.