

**Testimony of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
Committee on Public Safety and Security  
Tuesday February 10, 2009**

Senators Stillman and Guglielmo, Representatives Dargan and Perillo, members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, my name is Paul Costello Director of Apprenticeship and Training for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 90 and National Electrical Contractors Association Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee. I am a licensed electrical contractor E1-122305 and have been involved in the electrical industry for over 25 years. I am a member of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an associate member of the International Association of Electrical Inspectors (IAEI), and other industry related associations. I am also privileged to be a principal member of NFPA code making panel 18 for the NEC.

I am here to express our support of Senate Bill 788 An Act Requiring the State Building Code be Revised to Incorporate Revisions to the National Electrical Code. Without burdening you with all of the details of the code making process I would like to briefly express my concerns. The NEC is revised in its entirety every three years. There were 3688 proposals for changes to the 2008 NEC with an additional 2349 comments submitted for review, a large number of them resulting in major changes to the NEC. These important changes are vital to the safety of persons and property. As a principle member of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) code making panel appointed by the IBEW to represent 720,000 of its member. I was involved in one code change that will make every home in the state safer for our young children. A new requirement in the 2008 NEC will now require receptacles in a home to be tamper resistant. This new requirement will prevent a child from sticking an object such as keys, hair pins, and paper clips into the outlet and getting seriously burned or worse. This new requirement will provide a higher level of protection at a minimal cost. Unfortunately without the state adopting this edition in a timely manner this added level of safety will not be required in Connecticut. This is only one of hundreds of other new changes to the current code. I feel the citizens of Connecticut should be protected by the latest nationally recognized code in a timely manner and not wait till the next edition in 2011.

Other issues that arise are related to education. Apprentices and students in our Vocational Technical Schools in Connecticut and Apprenticeship Programs are taught with curriculum that is based on the most recent editions of the National Electrical Code. Textbook publishers print their text to reflect the latest edition of the NEC. As the new edition of the NEC is published it becomes more difficult to purchase older editions. Since 2005, electricians have been required to complete continuing education in order to renew their licenses. I am a strong supporter of the requirement. I am also an instructor approved by the Department of Consumer Protection. Each year I have trained over 1,200 of the approximately 13,000 licensed electricians in the state. All have expressed their frustration when the codes are not adopted or have been amended when they become available for adoption by the states. By not adopting the 2008 providers of continuing education will not be conveying the changes made in the 2008 NEC. When the next edition is adopted in 2011 it will not identify or reference any of the previous changes. This I feel is serious safety concern for all. I could only imagine how many lives would be lost if the same reasoning was applied to the decision of whether or not we should delay requiring seat belts in cars.

I feel that the most recent edition of the NEC should be adopted to protect the "*safeguarding of persons and property from hazards arising from the use of electricity*" (Article 90.1(A) 2008 NEC). I urge you to support Senate Bill 788.

Respectfully,

Paul Costello  
JATC Director