

To Members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

This is testimony on HB-6509 and Act Concerning Licensing Requirements of Certain Telecommunications Providers.

My name is John Sardo, I am the Business Manager of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 35 in Hartford, CT. I am urging the members of this committee not to support this bill HB-6509. I represent many Connecticut residents who are living in Connecticut working in the electrical industry. Every licensed individual has to serve an apprenticeship, take an extensive test to get licensed and then take seven (7) hours a year of continuing education on electrical code changes in order to keep the license.

This bill is unacceptable for many reasons. To attain a T-1 or T-2 license you must have four (4) to (6) years experience doing this type of work along with two (2) years of schooling. These requirements are there for these reasons; making sure installers know what they are doing, quality work, safety both personal and public.

Currently, there are (180) T-1 license holders, (565) T-2 license holders and (78) apprentices who work for (55) different companies. Much of this work can and is also performed by other licensed electrical workers which number over 12,000 in the State of Connecticut who follow all the requirements the State has put into law. The State gets a lot of money for the general fund from these license holders and is actually increasing the cost for licenses as part of the Governor's budget proposal. So doing away with any license requirement costs the State money.

When you drive around and see trucks working on cable TV or phone lines on the poles – are these people licensed? Through the years, it seems that many cable and phone companies use subcontractors to perform this dangerous work. There's anywhere from 2160 volts to 300,000 volts of electricity on these poles. Even in homes or commercial buildings, schools, hospitals there is live voltages that can be deadly. These subcontractors have magnetic signs on the trucks with out of state plates because they are not employees of these companies. Most are 1099 contractors which are illegal in the State of Connecticut. These contractors don't pay taxes, unemployment insurance or workers compensation on themselves. This creates another loss of tax revenue and jobs of Connecticut residents.

In these times, watering down licensing laws or doing away with them is the opposite of what needs to be done. I wouldn't want an unlicensed person working in my home or my kid's school. I again urge the committee not to support HB-6509. Thank you for your time.

John Sardo