



**Independent Electrical Contractors
of New England, Inc.**

**TESTIMONY OF
LISA HUTNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
INDEPENDENT ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS OF NEW ENGLAND
BEFORE THE
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 24, 2009**

As a trade association that represents many small employers, IEC oppose HB-6187 which imposes a **one-size-fits-all mandate on every business with more than 50 employees** regardless of whether it's a restaurant with a razor thin profit margin or a new start-up company that operates in the red.

Businesses, particularly seasonal industries, start-up businesses and small businesses with fewer than 100 employees **need the flexibility to design a wage and benefit package that allows them to grow and add jobs**. Most of these businesses operate with little or no profit margins and are tightly staffed. These companies simply can't absorb the cost of additional government mandates.

When faced with increased personnel costs and inflexible government mandates, many companies may simply decide to stay small rather than expand and add jobs to our economy. This has a stifling effect on entrepreneurship, which is absolutely critical to maintaining a healthy economy.

Mandated sick leave policies may result in a decrease in service or staffing in some industries because employers will be forced to make due with fewer employees. Such mandates drive up the cost of hiring an employee, making job growth a burden instead of a goal for small employers.

Sick leave policies vary from company to company because each company has different needs, different costs, and different obligations to its customers. For example, contractors that bid on construction projects would be hard pressed to cover mandated sick leave costs and complete projects on time and at the agreed upon price.

Mandated sick leave policies also undermine the ability of employers to develop common sense, fair policies that benefit their employees and allow the company to succeed, thereby ensuring continued employment.

HB - 6187 will hinder productivity and entrepreneurship - which are all critical to building and retaining a strong economy. While we encourage our member companies to treat employees fairly and offer them a mutually agreeable wage and benefits package, we oppose mandating a paid sick leave policy on employers.

The Independent Electrical Contractors of New England is the premier trade association representing Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island independent electrical contractors aggressively working with the industry to establish a free environment for merit shop -- a philosophy that promotes the concept of free enterprise, open competition and economic opportunity for all.

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