

**COMMERCE COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
MARCH 1, 2011**

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger and members of the committee my name is Cameron Champlin, I represent Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local Union 777 and have been a member for 45 years. I am here to testify in opposition to HB-6384 which would transfer the apprenticeship-training program from the Department of Labor to the Department of Economic and Community Development.

I entered my apprenticeship in 1965 not realizing what a great opportunity and career was being offered to me. After graduating from a five year apprenticeship I attained my Plumbing License and my Heating and Cooling License. Due to the training that I received I was able earn a very good living wage, receive health insurance, and a pension plan. This enabled me to become a productive member of society and of course a taxpayer to help keep the great state of Connecticut moving forward with all the programs which make us one of the best states to live in . I bought a home, raised three children and enjoyed a better than average life style, all due to apprenticeship as it is administered today.

A few years ago there was a possibility of understaffing the apprentice division, the industry believed that would affect the quality of the program. Both the Union and Non-Union sector joined forces and put forth a bill which would keep the program properly staffed therefore ensuring the quality would remain the same. Each apprentice would pay a Twenty-Five Dollar Fee and each Employer would pay a Thirty Dollar Fee for each apprentice in their employ. Since then the fees were doubled but the increase didn't stay in the DOL for apprenticeship it went to the General Fund.

The apprenticeship program has been very successfully managed by the DOL since its inception. We believe it would be a grave mistake to change that pattern. This is one of the most successful programs that the state has to offer. A change to another Department would affect the program in a negative way. In the DOL it is one of the most important priorities in the DECD it would not be.

The new commissioner of the DOL has been very involved in training in his last position and will certainly see that this program receives the attention it deserves.

For these reasons we feel it would be a terrible injustice to move the program out of the DOL. Remember one of Connecticut's greatest assets is its well-trained productive workforce.

If any of the committee members would like to discuss this matter further I can be reached at camc@att.net or cell (860) 287-0020. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.