



Independent Electrical Contractors of New England, Inc.

TO: The Honorable Edwin Gomes and Rep. Larry Butler
Members of the Housing Committee

From: Lisa Hutner, Executive Director

Date: February 8, 2011

Re: SB-666, AN ACT CONCERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF CERTAIN RENTAL PROPERTIES.

The Independent Electrical Contractors of New England (IEC-NE) *opposes SB-666*, which allows individuals who are not properly licensed to perform certain work and maintenance on residential rental properties that could endanger the lives and property of others.

Recognizing the inherent danger to life and property in working with high voltage technologies, Connecticut's occupational licensing laws require electrical work to be performed by duly licensed electrical contractors. Allowing electrical work to be performed by an unlicensed individual is clearly a life safety issue and may subject tenants to improper electrical installations that could result in serious or fatal injuries and the loss or destruction of property.

In order to become a licensed electrician in Connecticut, an individual must: 1) Complete an 8,000 hour (four-year) apprenticeship training program, which includes hands on training and related classroom instruction; 2) Pass a comprehensive licensing exam; and 3) Complete a minimum of 7 hours per year of continuing education, which includes information on building code compliance and OSHA safety practices. These requirements are designed to protect consumers from unsafe and potentially life threatening electrical installations.

Section 20-340(11) provides a limited exemption from the licensing laws for individuals who want to perform trade work on their own single-family home. However, the law has not been extended to permit individuals to perform trade work on other residential dwellings because this could place the occupants at risk without their knowledge or consent that the work was performed by an unlicensed, untrained individual.

SB-666 also makes reference to a "mechanics license", which leaves much open to discretion – is this an auto mechanic or some other type of mechanic that does not possess a trade license? An engineering degree is also of concern because there are different types of engineering degrees, most of which do not involve any expertise in electrical work or in the field. In no possible way should an owner who is not properly licensed and whom has not obtained their education and experience through a registered apprenticeship program and actual experience in the field under the direct supervision of a licensed professional be allowed to perform work that could endanger the lives and personal property of others.

We therefore urge lawmakers to oppose SB-666.

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.