

# Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association

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MEMBERS OF: CBIA – NFPA – ICC

Established 1972



## TESTIMONY OF JENNIFER JENNINGS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOUSING FEBRUARY 8, 2011

2011

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The Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association (CHCC) submits the following comments opposing SB-666, An Act Concerning The Maintenance Of Certain Rental Properties:

Members of the heating and cooling industry oppose this legislation which would create an exemption from state mandated licensing requirements for owners of certain rental properties. Passage of this legislation is unnecessary, could have wide-ranging negative impacts for both tradespersons and residents alike, and sets dangerous precedent beyond what has been long-settled state law regarding occupational licensing.

State law establishes a licensing system for several occupational trades overseen by the Examining Boards for the Electrical Work; Heating, Piping, and Cooling Work; Plumbing and Piping Work; Elevator Installation, Repair, and Maintenance Work; Automotive Glass Work and Flat Glass Work; and Fire Protection Sprinkler Systems Boards. Each trade has different levels of expertise—apprentice, journeyman, and contractor. Workers must meet education, training, and experience requirements to qualify for each level. Some trades also include a mandatory continuing education requirement. Members of the heating and cooling trades who hold unlimited licenses are qualified to perform any and all work related to their trade. The occupational licensing boards, which are comprised of both union and non-union contractors as well as the general public, also provide an important mechanism for ensuring the consistent and fair enforcement of the state's licensing laws. Because the boards provide balanced representation of the industry, license holders respect their decisions.

CHCC is also concerned that this bill contemplates an exemption from licensing requirements when "such owners possess certain credentials, such as a mechanic's license or a degree in engineering." This language lacks specificity and does not ensure that a "mechanic's license" must be for the work that an owner is actually performing. Furthermore, engineering credentials does not qualify an owner as having the actual skills and practice needed to physically perform the work.

Far too many contractors do not maintain the proper licenses or qualifications, creating public safety concerns. These laws must be vigorously enforced to protect consumers and employees. Strong enforcement of the state's licensing and apprenticeship laws relative to the heating and cooling industry along with all licensed trades is paramount. Ensuring that individuals performing work are held to high standards helps maintain the highest possible level of safety, training and professionalism for our industry, and for consumers.

CHCC thanks Committee for its consideration of our comments and urges rejection of SB-666.