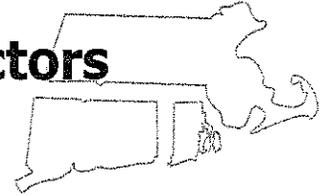




Independent Electrical Contractors of New England, Inc.



TO: Sen. Prague and Rep. Zalaski
Sen. Guglielmo and Rep. Rigby
Members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee

987

From: Lisa Hutner Stevens, Executive Director

Date: March 1, 2011

The Independent Electrical Contractors of New England (IEC-NE) **strongly opposes SB-987, An Act Requiring Community Workforce Agreements For Construction Projects At The Connecticut State University System.**

This bill would require a community workforce agreement be executed in conjunction with all construction contracts for projects on Connecticut State University System campuses, where the prevailing rate of wages is triggered. The result of this requirement would be to prevent members of the electrical industry from competing for Connecticut State University System projects, thus creating a burden on our state's taxpayers by reducing competition and driving up construction costs.

Currently, merit-shop contractors make up nearly 87% of the construction industry nationally and nearly 83% of the private work force here in Connecticut. Community workforce agreements as contemplated in SB-987 actually act to the detriment of the community by excluding a majority of the local workforce from the opportunity to participate in such construction projects at the Connecticut State University System. No merit shop contractor in the electrical industry would sign on to such an agreement because it would alienate their current workforce and force independent employers to submit to union rules. Furthermore, these union-only community workforce agreements will drive up costs by limiting competition and drive up costs because of their inefficient work rules. During these difficult times, can the State University System really afford to waste precious taxpayer funds as well as place limitations on the eligible workforce?

Merit shop electrical contractors employ a significant number of contractors, employees and apprentices in local communities throughout Connecticut. These shops have worked on many well known major construction projects which have been completed on-time and on-budget. IEC-NE supports open and fair competition on all construction projects, especially those that are taxpayer financed. Unfortunately, SB-987 will reduce this open and fair competition, reduce workforce eligibility, and drive up costs for taxpayers.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments, and we therefore urge you to oppose SB-987.

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.

1800 Silas Deane Highway, Rear Building, Rocky Hill, CT 06067
(860) 563-4953 Fax (860) 563-5453 Toll Free (866) GO IEC NE
Email: lisa@iecne.org www.iecne.org