

**Testimony of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Committee on Labor and Public Employees
Thursday February 10, 2011**

Senator Prague, Representative Zelaski, members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employees, my name is Paul Costello, I am here to testify on behalf of the IBEW, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and National Electrical Contractors Association Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee to express our Support of Senate Bill 480, An Act Concerning Construction Safety Refresher Training Courses.

The IBEW fully supports the requirement of OSHA 10 training for all workers on construction sites as stated in the current law. The IBEW was active in the writing of the original proposed Bill and suggesting amendments since its inception.

The OSHA Outreach Training Program is designed to train workers in the basics of occupational safety and health in construction. The ten hour course raises the awareness of the hazards associated with construction work and is only an orientation to Occupational Safety and Health. Workers must receive additional training on specific hazards associated with their jobs as stated by Federal OSHA. Upon successful completion of the training the individuals are issued a course completion card from Federal OSHA.

The individual's safety training does not end after they complete their OSHA 10 training. Most workers complete weekly on-the-job safety talks that are specific to the hazards they are exposed to on the site. Licensed electricians and plumbers began taking required continuing education classes in 2005 in order to renew their licenses. Part of the mandatory topics for continuing education courses are the same materials covered in an OSHA 10 course.

I have been an OSHA Outreach Trainer since 2001 and have provided training to hundreds of construction workers each year with OSHA 10 and OSHA 30 hour courses. In addition to teaching OSHA classes I also teach our Continuing Education course for licensed electricians. Each year nearly 1,200 electricians attend our course; many of them have also taken their OSHA training with us. Most have requested that we change the topics that we cover during a class not realizing that OSHA has a specific outline requirement that we must cover.

The IBEW feels that the information OSHA requires for a ten hour course can be easily accomplished between the combination of the safety topics covered in continuing education and an additional four hours of OSHA training every five years, provided this training is conducted by an authorized OSHA outreach trainer. A four hour refresher course for persons that possess an OSHA 10 or OSHA 30 card that has been issued prior combined with their continuing education training over the five year period will keep them abreast of the safety issues. Requiring the trainer to be an authorized OSHA outreach trainer will ensure that the latest changes to the Construction Standards will be covered in the refresher courses. This combined with weekly on-the-job safety training and yearly continuing education requirements that include construction safety specific to the hazards associated with the workers job will make certain that workers receive up to date information. This information is more relevant to workers once they have completed the initial orientation training covered by federal OSHA.

Thank you for your time and we ask that you support Senate Bill 480.

Respectfully,

Paul Costello
Director of Apprenticeship and Training