



TESTIMONY OF
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CONNECTICUT HEATING & COOLING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION (CHCC)
BEFORE THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
FEBRUARY 28, 2012

The Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association (CHCC) submits the following comments regarding ³²⁹⁷HB-S292, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study the Substitution of State Licensing Requirements with Military Occupational Specialty Training for Veterans.

Members of the heating and cooling industry applaud all current members of the military and veterans alike for their service to our country, and CHCC stands as a willing partner to help promote careers in the occupational trades for members of the military and veterans. While CHCC supports the intent behind this legislation, we would caution against any legislation that attempts to create an across-the-board exemption or credit, however, as this could have wide-ranging impacts for both tradespersons and consumers alike. With regard to the relevancy of the training received, it is our understanding that for the purposes of occupational trades licensed by the Department of Consumer Protection, the various occupational licensing boards are already required pursuant to Public Act 10-105 to accept relevant military training in considering whether an individual is eligible to obtain a license. This is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

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 plumbing and heating 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.

Far too many contractors do not maintain the proper licenses or qualifications, creating public safety concerns. In addition, individuals who have worked as apprentices but whose employers failed to properly register them, are unable to pursue licensing without repeating their apprenticeship hours. These laws must be vigorously enforced to protect consumers and employees. Strong enforcement of the state's licensing and apprenticeship laws relative to the plumbing, 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, just as it does in the military.

CHCC thanks all veterans for their service and thanks the Committee for its consideration of our comments.

CHCC is a trade association whose objectives are to strengthen and further trade relations, attract, educate and train necessary manpower, represent members at all levels of government and review and establish quality standards and procedures. The association represents over 125 Heating & Cooling Companies in Connecticut.