



March 11, 2014

Senator Holder-Winfield, Representative Tercyak and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

CHCC ASKS YOU TO SUPPORT H.B. 5454 AN ACT CONCERNING APPRENTICESHIP RATIOS.

2014

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This proposed bill is a jobs creation initiative in the construction industry. This change would allow firms to formally train unskilled workers expanding the work force, encouraging economic development while providing skilled workers to create a more efficient Connecticut.

One of the challenges faced by every contractor who has started a business is figuring out when it's time to grow and hire more employees. There are so many stories of the one-guy-and-a-truck operation that have grown to a large, fully staffed company; it certainly proves that the possibility to achieve greatness exists in this industry.

A business owner has a lot to think about and many indicators to consider when thinking about how and when to grow their company. And in CT once contractors have decided to add to their numbers and grow their workforce, they are faced with a hiring ratio regulation that inhibits their ability as a business owner to make that decision and grow.

The ever-changing environment has grown more demanding for efficiency, more efficient products, equipment and technology to use less energy and reduce expenditure. CT is working hard on energy efficient initiatives to make our state a more desirable and competitive state to live and do business in. The goals of the Comprehensive Energy Strategy that passed in last year's session are a true testament to those initiatives. However, if you reference the increase in gas customers the plan states and then you look at the stagnant numbers of the workforce charged with staffing that plan - it is obvious there needs to be a change. The workforce is not growing - yet the demand for services certainly are.

The process to become an S2 License holder (heating technician) in CT does not happen over night, it can be compared to a 4-year degree. It requires 720 hours of formal education and 8,000 hours of on the job training (OJT). During that on the job training the apprentice is paid competitive entry-level wages that increase with their experience per an approved agreement with the employer and the Department of Labor. In the past opponents of this ratio topic have raised concern regarding cheap labor. That thought is up surd as trainees / interns while still in school in most professions are unpaid in entirety.

How much does a nurse get paid when in clinical at nursing school? How much does an intern get paid working for the State of CT in various capacities? Ultimately a college student completes an internship as opportunity to have experience to compliment their degree upon completion. However, the HVAC industry pays above minimum wages and provides benefits while training. This bill is simply asking to allow contractors to open more opportunities within the trade, to allow for the creation of more jobs in our state, to keep the students in our state whom our tax dollars paid to educate.

Our contractors believe that the role of our industry is to deliver a safe, comfortable and energy efficient home-to-home owners and businesses they serve. Without the technicians to deliver on that promise, service can be delayed and inflationary pricing will occur creating an adverse effect to all of our initiatives of making a better CT.

**CHCC ASKS YOU TO JOIN FORCES IN CREATING JOBS IN CONNECTICUT -
SUPPORT H.B. 5454.**

Warm Regards,

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