CT-PHCC
PLUMBING-HEATING-COOLING CONTRACTORS OF CONNECTICUT

TESTIMONY
JACK CAWLEY
PRESIDENT
CT PLUMBING, HEATING & COOLING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE
LABOR COMMITTEE
MARCH 11, 2014

The Connecticut Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors Association (CT-PHCC) ***supports*** **HB-5454, An Act Concerning Apprenticeship Ratios.**

HB-5454 makes a modest change to the existing hiring ratio that would benefit some plumbing & HVAC contractors by essentially opening up three more apprentice slots; expanding the 1:1 hiring ratio from the first two contractors/journeymen to apprentices (current law) up to the first five contractors/journeymen to apprentices (proposed bill).

This legislation would increase the apprenticeship opportunities in the state by requiring a ratio of one journeyperson or contractor to one apprentice for up to five apprentices. Many of us in the plumbing, piping and heating, ventilation and air conditioning trades need help to strengthen and expand our workforce in Connecticut, and in particular, to provide for the staffing needed to fulfill the state's recently enacted natural gas expansion & conversion plans, as well as other energy efficiency initiatives.

This modest change in the hiring ratio will give plumbing and heating contractors more flexibility to hire apprentices, which will allow our small businesses to grow and add jobs to the economy. This small change to the hiring ratio will help remove some barriers to workforce entry and allow contractors to address the backlog and hire additional apprentices by making necessary and appropriate adjustments to the hiring ratio while maintaining safety standards through the job site ratio.

Finally, CT-PHCC should point out that the industry wants to provide technical high school students with more learning opportunities and practical experience in our trade by ensuring "pre-apprentices" from the technical high schools do not count against a contractor's hiring ratio as they currently do.

We therefore urge passage of this bill, and would ask the Committee to explore the "pre-apprentice" issue as well. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB-5454.

CT-PHCC is a not-for-profit trade association that represents the professional plumbing, heating and cooling contractors in the state of Connecticut. CT-PHCC and its members are committed to protecting the health and safety of the public. Contractors who belong to the association have demonstrated reliability and trustworthiness and are licensed by the state of Connecticut.