**GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 11, 2014**

**RE: S.B. - 412 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING STATUTES**

SUBMITTED BY: Cameron Champlin representing Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local Union 777

Senator Doyle, Representative Baram and members of the committee, Local 777 is in strong support of this bill. I have been a member of the Heating and Cooling Piping and Sheet Metal Occupational Licensing Board since 1988. Until 2007 the boards would conduct hearings and impose the penalty that they thought was appropriate for the severity of the infraction. The decision was then sent to the Commissioner for his approval or his suggestion of what he thought was appropriate. That decision was brought back to the board for a final vote. It would then go to the legal division for further action.

In 2007 H.B. Bill - 6983 was passed and became Public Act No. 07-188. This bill was supposed to make it a felony for any person or company that willfully violated the law. That didn't happen, it did however make it a class B misdemeanor. During the discussions for the final draft of the bill the issue of the boards not being involved in these decisions was brought out. At that time the Commissioner of DPC and the person in charge of the enforcement division said it was an error in drafting the bill. It was late in the session and they were afraid if any changes were made it might not have the time required to pass. We were promised at that time that it would be corrected in the next session. That never happened.

Since that time hearings for violations are done internally and the amount of money collected from fines has dropped dramatically. Instead of fining violators in many cases the department has them sign an Agreement of Voluntary Compliance. This is not fair to the companies that are complying with all of Connecticut's rules and regulations and have to compete with these violators.

I believe there are no better individuals more qualified to make the judgment of how serious an offense is than people that have experience in that field. This bill would give back the authority to the boards along with the commissioner to make these decisions

For these reasons we respectfully request that you vote to move this bill forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this very important issue. If any more information is needed please contact at camc@att.net or my cell (860) 287-0020.