TESTIMONY
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING – TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2014

RE: **H.B. 5454 - AN ACT CONCERNING APPRENTICESHIP RATIOS**

SUBMITTED BY: Joyce A. Wojtas, Mechanical Contractors Association of CT

The Mechanical Contractors Association of Connecticut would like to go on record in opposition to H.B.5454. This issue has been debated over and over again for many years in the General Law Committee and in 2010, Senate Bill 133 passed and became law, Public Act 10-27. This law established the apprenticeship ratios that are currently on the books for the Electrical, Plumbing, Heating, Piping and Cooling, Sprinkler Fitter and Sheet Metal Work trades.

The current ratios were not created in a vacuum. It took after many months of meetings held by a committee that included both union and non-union groups and associations. **Those who testified in favor** of S.B. 133 at the General Law Public Hearing on 2/26/10 as indicated in the JF Report included:

- **UA Plumbers & Pipe Fitters Local 777 – Cam Champlin**
- Steve Basso, CT Heating & Cooling Contractors (CHCC)
- **Lelah Campo, Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC)**
- Lisa Hunter, Independent Electrical Contractors of New England
- **Jen Jennings, CT Plumbing, Heating & Cooling Contractors Association (CHCC)**

The main purpose of the Apprenticeship Training Program is to allow an employer to hire and train apprentices to learn the skills of the trade under the direct supervision of a licensed journey person and to one day become competent/licensed journey persons. The employer receives a tax credit for the registered apprentice. Ratio relief can be granted by the DOL if needed and employer is compliant.

The changes in this bill could encourage the small business to lay off qualified journey persons and replace them with apprentices to save on labor costs. The one to one hiring ratio could also endanger the lives of the apprentice if there are not enough licensed people to supervise work because of illness or other emergencies that could arise. This in turn could also endanger the lives of the consumer or the public, especially if the business is installing gas lines, any high pressure water or steam lines, chemical lines, electrical work , or many other installations that require the skills and knowledge of a licensed person.

The current law is working. We urge you to oppose H.B. 5454

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