



February 17, 2015

Testimony of
Jennifer Jennings, Executive Director
&
Joe DeFusco, President Elect & Legislative Chair
Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association

Before the
Labor & Public Employees Committee
Regarding

Senate Bill 81, An Act Concerning Journeymen and Apprentices

2015

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This proposed bill seeks to change the state's apprenticeship hiring ratio to allow for the hiring of up to 5 apprentices per journeyman or contractor.

In our industry, and in our association, workforce development is the number one concern right now. The heating, ventilation and air conditioning trades need help to strengthen and expand the HVAC workforce in Connecticut. This workforce development need is driven by a combination of four significant factors: the state's natural gas expansion & conversion plans; other energy efficiency initiatives; the "greying" or aging-out of our existing workforce; and overall consumer/customer demand. CHCC is particularly interested in expanding the existing hiring ratio, especially for the HVAC trade, and specifically for residential work.

Therefore, CHCC is supportive of the intent behind this legislation. However, CHCC has had discussions with those who may have generally opposed broad hiring ratio changes in the past and it is our goal to have good faith discussions and collaborate with those from organized labor in our trade and others on HVAC workforce needs. Specifically, CHCC is looking forward to participating in an informal working group or task force to investigate and address our immediate and future workforce issues and to recommend changes to the hiring ratio that makes sense for the HVAC industry while also maintaining safety and workforce integrity. CHCC has already engaged in preliminary discussions in this regard with the Co-Chairs of the General Law Committee since the state's apprenticeship hiring ratio is determined by Department of Consumer Protection regulations.

Thank you for your consideration of CHCC's comments, and we look forward to working with all members of the legislature on creating and growing jobs in our trade.

Organized in 1972, the Connecticut Heating and Cooling Contractors Association is an independent non-profit trade association with membership open to all state licensed merit shop heating, refrigeration and air-conditioning contractors, sheetmetal contractors and plumbers that employ licensed mechanics according to state law. It is also open to associate members representing manufacturers, wholesale suppliers, dealers, and other HVAC related firms and affiliate members including technical school instructors and building officials. Our 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.