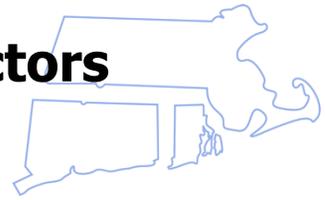




# Independent Electrical Contractors of New England, Inc.



Testimony  
of the  
Independent Electrical Contractors of New England, Inc.  
Regarding  
Governor's S.B. No. 15, "*An Act Adopting The Requirements Of North Carolina State  
Board Of Dental Examiners V. Federal Trade Commission And Making Minor Revisions  
To Boards And Commissions Statutes*"  
before  
Government Administrations & Elections Committee  
February 22, 2016

The Independent Electrical Contractors of New England (IEC-NE) **has serious concerns with SB-15 and opposes the bill as currently drafted.** This legislation would make significant changes to the longstanding functions and operations of the Electrical Work Examining Board, by which our industry is governed, along with the other occupational licensing boards within the Department of Consumer Protection. While we understand that this legislation is prompted by the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners v. Federal Trade Commission*, IEC-NE is concerned that the proposed legislation as currently drafted could undermine the independence, autonomy, and perhaps most importantly, the professional expertise of the licensing boards, thus potentially adversely impacting our industry.

The Electrical Work Examining Board has been a powerful tool in outlining the training and educational requirements for licensure needed to protect consumers from unscrupulous and/or shoddy work. Unfortunately, far too many contractors do not maintain the proper licenses or try to bypass training to perform work for which they are not qualified, creating public safety concerns. By ensuring that individuals performing electrical work are held to high standards, the electrical examining board helps maintain the highest possible level of safety and training for our industry. In addition, having strong, independent, occupational licensing boards, comprised of our industry peers, sends an important signal to unscrupulous contractors that the state's licensing laws can be and will be enforced.

The occupational licensing boards, which are comprised of both union and non-union contractors as well as members of the general public, provide an important mechanism for determining whether an individual has met the qualifications of licensure and ensuring the consistent and fair enforcement of the state's licensing laws.

In the past, the board has been pressured to create new license or limited license categories or issue licenses to individuals who are not duly qualified or trained. Because the board provides a strong, balanced representation of the industry and public, it can withstand such pressure to ensure that licenses are only issued to duly qualified individuals and that new license or limited license categories are only created with training and educational requirements that will ensure the safety of consumers and workers.

Again, while we recognize that this current measure was proposed in response to the “North Carolina Dental” decision, we believe there may be other ways to achieve the goals of protecting the state’s interests and being in accord with the court decision without eroding the independence and autonomy of the licensing boards. We therefore urge you work with representatives of impacted organizations like IEC-NE to develop alternative proposals.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments, and we look forward to working with members of the GAE Committee, the Governor’s Office, and others on this important matter. Please contact the IEC-NE Office (contact info below) and/or IEC-NE’s lobbyist Andy Markowski of Statehouse Associates at (860) 256-8295.