

Connecticut General Assembly
General Law Committee
300 Capitol Ave # 5100
Hartford, CT 06106



Re: General Assembly; Raised Bill No. 191
February Session, 2016
LCO No. 1514
01514 _____ GL_

Dear General Law Committee:

On behalf of Acorn Stairlifts, Inc., ("Acorn"), please accept this letter of testimony in support of proposed Bill for Review no. 12.: **S.B. No. 191 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING INSTALLERS OF RESIDENTIAL STAIR LIFTS. (GL)**. The purpose of this bill is to allow registered home improvement contractors to install residential stair lifts.

Acorn fully supports the proposed repeal of Section 1. Subdivision (7) of section 20-330 of the general statutes and substitution of language that states: (7) "Elevator installation, repair and maintenance work" means the installation, erection, maintenance and repair of (A) **residential stair lifts by a home improvement contractor registered under chapter 400**, (B) all types of elevators, dumb waiters, escalators, and moving walks, and (C) all mechanical equipment, fittings, associated piping and wiring from a source of supply brought to the equipment room by an unlimited electrical contractor for all types of machines used to hoist or convey persons or materials, but [does not include] not including temporary hoisting machines used for hoisting materials in connection with any construction job or project (**Emphasis added**). In short, this important bill will allow for stairlifts to be installed by properly registered home improvement contractors, which will expand the opportunities for more efficient, cost-effective sales and installations of stairlifts.

Acorn is the world's largest independent manufacturer and supplier of stairlifts, with sales in over 70 countries and offices on three continents. Acorn is proud to design, manufacture and sell its own superior DC powered stairlift. Each stairlift is certified to comply with ASME A18.1-Safety Standard for Platform Lifts and Stairway Chairlifts. Acorn has installed over 125,000

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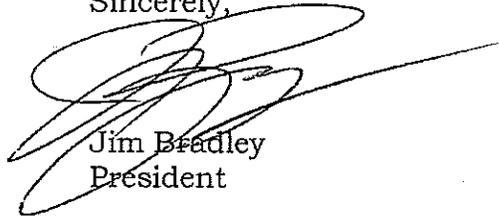
stairlifts in the United States since 2001 and in 2015 it sold and had installed 454 lifts in Connecticut. The purpose of these lifts is quite simple- to provide a better quality of life to those that are sick, infirm or elderly.

Yet, despite this ASME certification and Acorn's robust in-house initial training and recurrent training program for installers, to date, these lifts could only be installed in Connecticut by a journey person holding a Limited Elevator License-R6. Such a requirement is overly burdensome because it requires a company like Acorn to obtain a Limited Elevator Contractor License-R5 in CT. Both licenses require that the holder serve an extensive apprenticeship program in the state. As a result, Acorn has to hire a sub-contractor (R-5) to perform installs in Connecticut at a significantly higher cost. This cost, in turn, results in a higher cost to the elderly and disabled who need the stairlifts, as well as delays in estimated times to install due to there only being a handful of these licenses that have been approved by the Elevator Board.

Connecticut is one of the only states that mandates such a requirement. Indeed, last year, Michigan, historically one of the strictest elevator license states, amended its state statute to allow for installation of stairlifts by installers Certified by the manufacturer. (See, Michigan Statutes Chapter 408. LABOR ELEVATOR SAFETY BOARD Current through P.A. 8 of the 2016 Legislative Session § 408.814a.) Other states that also allow for installation by certified installers or home improvement contractors include Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Moreover, 38 states allow for a specific exemption from Elevator Licensing requirements for Residential installations.

Co-Chairs Mr. Leone and Mr. Baram, Members of the General Law committee, on behalf of Acorn I thank you for the opportunity to present this testimonial evidence in support of this bill to allow for installation of chairlifts by registered home improvement contractors. Stairlifts provide invaluable support for those who are unable to ambulate freely throughout their homes. This proposed bill will allow for greater ease of access to stairlifts, through a process that will be more affordable than under the present legislature, resulting in greater benefits to many of your constituents. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jim Bradley
President