

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1361

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, April 1, 1997

Title: An act relating to regulation of electricians and electrical installations.

Brief Description: Regulating electricians and electrical installations.

Sponsors: House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Clements, Skinner and Honeyford).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 3/25/97, 4/1/97 [DPA, DNPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Schow, Chair; Horn, Vice Chair; Anderson and Newhouse.

Minority Report: Do not pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Franklin, Fraser and Heavey.

Staff: Patrick Woods (786-7430)

Background: The Department of Labor and Industries currently regulates the installation, repair and maintenance of electrical equipment and services. The primary components of this regulation process involve: the licensing of electrical contractors; the certification of electrical administrators; and the permitting and inspection of electrical work. In addition, the department administers detailed requirements as to the certification of electricians and the supervision of their work-sites. These requirements include the following:

Journeyman Electrician Examination. In order to perform commercial/industrial electrical installations or services, an individual worker must pass a comprehensive state electrical examination. An individual is permitted to take the examination only after meeting one of the following training requirements: (1) completed four years of full-time work supervised by a journeyman electrician; (2) successfully completed an approved apprenticeship program; (3) completed two years at an approved technical school, along with two years of full-time supervised work; or (4) graduated from "a trade school program in the electrical construction trade established during 1946" (the Perry Institute).

Work-Site Supervision. An electrical apprentice or trainee may work in the commercial/industrial electrical construction trade if directly supervised, on a one to one ratio, by a certified journeyman electrician. However, the ratio requirement did not apply to trainees that were graduates of the Perry Institute electrical program.

In 1992, the Washington Court of Appeals invalidated the Perry Institute exemption on the grounds it created as single entity classification that violated the privileges and immunities clause of the state's Constitution.

Summary of Amended Bill: The current statutory requirements regarding electrical journeyman exam eligibility and work-site ratios that specifically reference the Perry Institute are deleted.

Journeyman Electrician Examination. The current eligibility requirements to sit for a journeyman certificate are modified. Nonprofit nationally accredited technical or trade schools, licensed by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, are added to the list of schools whose graduates may substitute up to two years of schooling for work experience.

Work-Site Supervision. The current one to one ratio of trainees to journeyman electricians is increased to four trainees per journeyman electrician. The increased ratio only applies to trainees that are enrolled and working as a part of an electrical construction program at a nonprofit or public trade school approved by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

The director of the Department of Labor and Industries is directed to appoint a chief electrical inspector who must provide the final interpretation of electrical standards, rules and policies of the department and its personnel.

An electrician from another jurisdiction applying for a journey or specialty electrical certificate must provide evidence to the Department of Labor and Industries that her or she has qualifications equal to those established under Washington's statute.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The director of the Department of Labor and Industries is directed to appoint a chief electrical inspector who must provide the final interpretation of electrical standards, rules and policies of the department and its personnel.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 21, 1997.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The bill will address the inconsistencies in state statute with current court decisions concerning the Perry Institute. In addition, it will provide a widely agreed upon standard of eligibility requirements to take the state's journeyman electrician examination, along with work site supervision requirements.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Representative Clements, prime sponsor; Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Association.