



Associated Builders and Contractors of Massachusetts  
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Massachusetts  
Chapter

July 1, 2015

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL (Electricians.Board@state.ma.us)

Chair Peter A. Senopoulos  
Board of State Examiners of Electricians  
1000 Washington Street, Suite 710  
Boston, MA 02118

Dear Chairman Senopoulos & Members of the Board:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors of Massachusetts (ABC) and its 400 member companies employing over 20,000 men and women across the Commonwealth, I wish to register our written comments in regard to the Board of State Examiners of Electricians' (hereinafter the "Board") regulatory review being considered and conducted pursuant to Executive Order 562. After consultation with our membership and discussions amongst leaders in the electrical trade, we believe addressing the following issues will better serve the electrical industry and accomplish Governor Baker's intent to reduce unnecessary costs, burdens and complexity imposed by existing regulations.

The Commonwealth's electrical industry is experiencing a labor crisis resulting from the length of training, restrictions on reciprocity, unnecessarily burdensome educational requirements, and a general inability to license otherwise qualified tradesmen and women.

Length of Training

The length of apprenticeship training is overtly excessive. The five year apprenticeship training period has a prohibitive effect of redirecting potential young electricians towards alternate fields of work. Although certain provisions authorize a waiver of up to 1000 clock hours and six months of credit, it is often difficult to get approved and even with such served time the length of training is still excessive. With advances in technology and training, this length should be shortened to attract capable young professionals.

Reciprocity

Currently, as it applies to licensing electricians, Massachusetts has established reciprocity only with New Hampshire despite similarly situated industry standards in neighboring states. The ability to bring in qualified electricians holding licenses in surrounding states to address the labor void is essential to the growth of the electrical trade industry. Current regulations contain exorbitant educational requirements for experienced out-of-state electricians to become licensed within the Commonwealth. Although the regulations do contain certain provisions (237 CMR 31.11-13) addressing the ability for non-licensed and/or out-of-state applicants to waive certain requirements, such authority is delegated to the discretion and subjectivity of the Board, which is rarely approved in practice. It is imperative to open the Commonwealth's electrician workforce to willing and able out-of-state electricians.



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### Expiration of Educational Requirements

Several years ago when the economy faltered, many companies were forced to recalibrate and consolidate in an attempt to remain in business. This resulted in many electricians moving from the Commonwealth or entering new professions. Now that business is regaining its footing, those former Massachusetts Electricians seek the opportunity to re-enter its workforce but are unable to due to restrictive educational requirements.

The "Education Expiration" provision (237 CMR 13.09(2)) provides that any applicant who completed their education nine years or more prior to the effective date of the current code will receive no credit and therefore be required to retake all requisite educational hours prior to sitting for an electrician's license examination. Additionally, any applicant who completed their education more than six but less than nine years prior to the effective date of the current code will only be partially credited with 50% of the required educational hours and must retake the remainder prior to sitting for an electrician's license examination. This "Education Expiration" provision is detrimental to the overall health of the industry by creating a wider labor gap.

These regulations seem to disregard the intent of the examination, which aims to assess the aptitude of an individual for a particular license. It is redundant to require seasoned electricians, containing the capability to pass the electricians examination, to retake all educational requirements. Yet, due to the regulations, they must begin anew. It is foolhardy to believe any experienced electrician would subject themselves to the prohibitive educational requirements after a break in Massachusetts service. We advise that an applicant should be permitted to obtain an electrician's license if they can pass the examination based upon their existing competency gained from their prior education and experience. Therefore, it would be prudent to eliminate 237 CMR 13.09(2), the "Education Expiration" provision.

### Journeyman to Apprentice Ratio

Another barrier towards expanding the electrician's workforce is to reexamine the journeyman to apprentice ratio. 237 CMR 18.01(7) establishes that a Journeyman electrician may have only one apprentice under his or her direct supervision or employment. This strict one to one ratio is another limiting factor detracting young skilled workers.

While taking into account obvious safety factors, there are certain situations where this ratio could be expanded. For instance, an exception for experienced veterans could be implemented to offset the ratio from one to two apprentices if the additional apprentice is a veteran with experience while in service. Although veterans may waive certain educational and experience requirements, this would expand the workforce by authorizing companies to employ veterans who, in service of their country, have attained the discipline and training that will allow them to be successful as electricians.



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The electrical workforce has been stymied by onerous and unnecessary regulations. Addressing these issues would provide opportunities for existing qualified electricians and young individuals to enter or re-enter the Commonwealth's electrical workforce. I appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments in regard to the Board of State Examiners of Electricians regulatory review being considered and conducted pursuant to Executed Order 562. Should the Board have any questions regarding these recommendations please do not hesitate to contact our office. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Robert J. McGovern, Esq.  
Director of Public Affairs  
Associated Builders and Contractors of Massachusetts  
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cc: Chuck Borstel, Director  
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