

**INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF
ELECTRICAL WORKERS**



LOCAL 99

Joseph L. Walsh, Jr.
Business Manager

Wayne A. Tait
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February 24, 2021

Hon. Anastasia Williams
Chairwoman
House Committee on Labor
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Opposition to H-5476; AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS

Dear Chairwoman Williams,

On behalf of the women and men of IBEW Local Union 99, I write to oppose **H-5476**, which will be heard this evening at House Labor.

Electrical work in the State of Rhode Island is properly regulated by the Department of Labor, utilizing standards of compliance such as apprenticeship, licensing, and continuing education.

Electrical work is a specific craft, much like all mechanical trades. An electrician is no more a plumber than an HVAC technician is an electrician. This is why we have specific requirements for training and testing in our respective crafts. It would be nonsensical to believe that a single exam would keep the worker or the general public safe without the worker having the benefit of 8000 hours of on-the-job training or 576 hours of classroom education. The aforementioned are the state requirements to do the exact same work as a qualified electrician.

In an age of cell phones and phone apps, reaching a qualified tradesperson for any craft is available to everyone 24 hours a day when looking for someone licensed and qualified to do the work.

Having significant experience in this portion of the trade myself, I can testify with certainty that the majority of the troubleshooting I have been involved in exposed the deficiencies to be in the low voltage circuitry of the equipment. The low voltage portion of the heating and refrigeration equipment is already exempt from the licensing law by the State of Rhode Island.

In conclusion, I urge you to vote against this legislation for the reasons I have shared with you. I am available to speak on this matter at any time that is convenient for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph L. Walsh, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Joseph L. Walsh, Jr. / Business Manager IBEW Local Union 99
401-954-9424

cc: Committee Members
Paul Macdonald / IBEW Local Union 99 Lobbyist