

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS



LOCAL 99

Joseph L. Walsh, Jr.
Business Manager

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President
2.5.26

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Representative Arthur Corvese, Chairman
House Labor Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov

RE: Support of H-7146 AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION
Dear Chairman Corvese,

As Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 99, I represent over 1000 men and women who provide their skills through our vast network of signatory contractors in the Electrical Industry in the State of Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts. I also serve as one, if not the only, voice of the men and women who are not yet fortunate enough to be represented by an electrical labor union in the state of Rhode Island.

I am writing to you today in **strong support of H-7146**

This bill is a very simple bill. Passage of this bill will allow a trades person, who is regulated by the Rhode Island Department of Labor, to put their license in retiree status at 65 years of age, similar to how a law license can be put in retiree status.

In the electrical industry particularly, a person will serve a four year apprenticeship which means they will spend four years in the classroom in the evening and concurrently work four years on the jobsite to be able to test for a journey level license. If they wish to test for a master level license, they must gain two more years, after successfully achieving journey level status, of on the job experience before they can test for the master's license. As they travel through their career they are required by statute to financially support their license and stay current on the industry codes and regulations through mandatory continuing education. Outside of meeting the legal standard, that level of commitment and investment in their industry translates in to one thing, pride.

That pride causes many retirees who are on modest fixed incomes, and well past their working days, to continue to support their license so they don't surrender something they worked so hard to earn.

This bill will allow that person to maintain ownership of their license, albeit in a status that prevents them the use of it. If the person finds themselves in a position where they must return to gainful employment, they can reverse the retiree status by paying the current annual license fee and attend the most current continuing education.

In conclusion, I am an extremely strong supporter in trade licensing and believe the standard for the electrical industry is just, with this one caveat. This bill becomes a matter of respect for the licensed trades person and the career long commitment they made. They should not have to choose between daily expenses and maintaining the ability to return to the trade if the cost of retirement turn out to be more than any of us anticipate. Local 99 **strongly supports HB-7146** for the reasons mentioned above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joseph L. Walsh, Jr." followed by a cursive signature.

Joseph L. Walsh, Jr. / Business Manager

cc: James DeCastro / Committee Clerk, Committee Members, Paul Macdonald / Local 99 Lobbyist, BuildRI, RI Building Trades, Pat Crowley/Erica Hammond RI AFL-CIO, Paul Alvarez UA Local 51, Pat Donlan SMART Local 17, Al Noons IUEC Local 39, James White IUOE Local 57