

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS - LOCAL UNION No. 24

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Written Testimony of

Peter Demchuk, Business Manager,

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers LOCAL 24

Before the

House Economic Matters Committee On

HB 1127 Maryland Electricians Act of 2020

Opposed

February 20, 2020

Chairman Davis and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony in **Opposition** to House Bill 1127.

For the record, my name is Peter Demchuk. I am a 40 year member, and the Business Manager, of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 24 located in Baltimore. In addition, I am a lifelong resident of Maryland, residing in District 7 of Baltimore County. I represent approximately 2000 hardworking, Maryland tax paying electricians, and low voltage technicians.

In 2019 Delegate Hornberger had several meetings he put together for the interested parties concerning two bills, HB792 **Maryland Electrician Act** and HB 905 **Electricians –Low-Voltage Electricians, Continuing Education, and Penalties**. The parties worked through their differences and I submitted testimony in support of both bills. Unfortunately the resolve came late session and wasn't cross-filed so the matter died.

This year House Bill 1127 was introduced I see it as HB792 and HB905 combined as one bill, in my opinion this was NOT a good thing!

HB 1127 took the Electricians bill and merged it with the Low Voltage Electrician bill, giving both classifications equal abilities in the trade without the skills and knowledge required, and possibly exposing Marylanders to dangerous or deadly installations. I don't think this was intentional but it happened.

Electricians and Low Voltage Electricians are similar but yet different, in the medical field I would say it's like a Doctor and a Nurse. Most Union Electricians go thru a 5 year Apprenticeship Program (other state approved electrician programs are 4 years) while the Low Voltage Apprenticeship Program is 3 years. The electrician is trained to install electricity operating at tens of thousands of volts vs 40 volts for the low voltage tradesperson.

Maryland needs an Electricians License that covers Master Electricians, Journeypersons or anyone in the business of providing electrical services. Electricity is invisible but if you come in contact with 40 volts you may not realize you touched it, at higher voltages if it doesn't **kill** you, you'll **will** know it!

Between 2010 and 2014, U.S. municipal fire departments responded to an average of 45,210 home structure fires involving electrical failure or malfunction. These fires caused annual averages of 420 civilian deaths, 1,370 civilian injuries, and \$1.4 billion in direct property damage. 57% of these fires were caused by the wiring.

I truly believe Maryland needs to license anyone who is installing electrical services, in order to keep Maryland residents safe! But HB 1127 is not the answer!

We urge the Committee for an **unfavorable** report!

Thank you!

Sincerely,



Peter P. Demchuk

Business Manager

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