



Joint Testimony of the Heating & Air Conditioning Contractors of Maryland (HACC) and the Association of Air Conditioning Professionals (AACP)

Before the Maryland House Economic Matters Committee

February 7th Hearing: House Bill 132 “Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning, and Refrigeration Services - Journeyman License - Qualifications”

Position: Favorable

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and honorable members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 132. The Heating & Air Conditioning Contractors of Maryland (HACC) and the Association of Air Conditioning Professionals (AACP) strongly support this bill, and our organizations respectfully ask for a favorable report from the Committee to ensure safety and preparedness of workers in our industry.

HACC and AACP are the two trade associations for independent heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR) professionals in Maryland. Together, HACC and AACP represent 217 local HVACR companies across the state of Maryland. Our members are a critical skilled workforce providing essential energy services to homes, businesses, and other facilities.

Modernizing Requirements for HVACR Journeyman License to Improve Safety

HB132 would update the requirements to earn an HVACR journeyman license in the State of Maryland, bringing them up to current standards for the trade and ensuring an adequately trained workforce. Specifically:

- **Increasing on-the-job training experience to 6,000 hours minimum** (up from the mere 1,875 hours currently required) would ensure that HVACR journeyman license candidates have sufficient hands-on training and field experience to provide HVACR services as a journeyman under the direction and control of a licensed contractor. Particularly with the advancement of HVAC technology and equipment, as well as increased energy efficiency standards and building codes, and more sophisticated health and safety protocols, there is industry consensus that less than 6,000 hours is simply not enough training to reach journeyman level.
- **Increasing length of time with apprentice license to 4 years**, up from 3 years currently, would ensure that apprentices are not missing out on critical 4th year advanced skills and knowledge that are foundational to a safe and well-equipped workforce. For example, in the 4th year of a registered apprenticeship program, HVACR Students are taught important advanced subjects including buildings codes, electrical codes, advanced schematics operation and troubleshooting, heat load calculations, and boilers

and hydronics, balancing and measuring air distribution systems. Maryland law already requires 4 years as an apprentice in other high-skilled trades, including Plumbing and Electrical.¹

Graduates of apprenticeship programs approved by the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council (MATC) can earn their HVACR journeyman license without having to take the examination. **These registered apprenticeship programs already encompass a 4-year curriculum of classroom training and 8,000 hours of on-the-job training per the standards set by MATC.** By updating the Journeyman License Requirements to better align with those requirements for registered apprenticeship programs, this bill helps to ensure candidates are prepared to provide HVACR services safely and effectively with the increased independence associated with the journeyman license.

Setting Clear Expectations for Journeyman License Candidates

This bill also helps to ensure that candidates have clear expectations of the minimum necessary time and experience in the field to earn their license, so that more candidates can be successful when they take the examination for licensure. The current requirements hurt candidates by allowing them to sit for the test before they have acquired sufficient experience, which could have the unintended consequence of causing individuals to give up on the industry before they earn their Journeyman License. Unfortunately, many people who take the test do not pass. **Data obtained from the Maryland Department of Labor shows that the pass rate for the Journeyman HVACR License Test is just 38%. Since January 2006, over 2700 candidates have taken and failed the Journeyman HVACR License Test.** Increasing the HVACR Journeyman License Requirements to sit for the test to better align with requirements of 4-year apprenticeship programs would help ensure that more candidates are getting the adequate training they need to successfully become Journeyman Licensed.

Conclusion

HACC and AACP ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB 132 to help ensure a safe and well-prepared Maryland HVACR workforce.

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¹ [§12-302](#) Plumbing License Requirements; [§6-304](#) Electrical License Requirements