

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS - LOCAL UNION No. 24

AFFILIATED WITH:

Baltimore-D.C. Metro Building Trades Council — AFL-CIO

Baltimore Port Council

Baltimore Metro Council — AFL-CIO

Central MD Labor Council — AFL-CIO

Del-Mar-Va Labor Council — AFL-CIO

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Written Testimony of
Peter Demchuk, Business Manager, IBEW LOCAL 24
Before the
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee On
SB 762 – Maryland Electricians Act - Revisions
SUPPORT

January 26, 2021

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my written testimony **Supporting** SB 762.

For the record, my name is Peter Demchuk. I am a 41- year member, and the Business Manager, of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 24 located in Baltimore. I represent approximately 2,000 hardworking, Maryland tax paying electricians. I am a lifelong resident of Maryland and reside in District 7 of Baltimore County.

Being an electrician is one of the most dangerous occupations in America. Electricians are faced with life or death issues of safety every day. That's not hyperbole or exaggeration, life or death, every day. That's just in regards to themselves and the other workers on the construction site. Over 160 electrical fatalities occurred on a jobsite in 2019 and 68% of those deaths were to workers younger than 45. That's not even considering the safety of the end user of the electrical system or the destruction of property that could occur with an improperly wired structure. An estimated 24,000 residential electrical fires are reported to US fire departments every year. This results in over 300 deaths and over 870 million dollars in property loss. Electricity is invisible and dangerous, for the workers installing it and the people using it.

Right now, Maryland has an inadequate standard for who can and can't do electrical work. We see a lot of untrained and unqualified people installing work on residential and commercial projects all over our jurisdiction. Many of these workers are particularly vulnerable, to being exploited and exposed to unsafe working conditions. Some are not even residents of the State and out-of-state contractors bring workforces from as far away as Florida or Texas to take work from Maryland residents. At least with licensing requirements there would be a standard for every individual doing electric work in the State. That way when out-of-town contractors come to Maryland, their workforce would have to be as safe and as well trained as what we have here.

An Electrical Licensing bill has been discussed many times and for many years and the IBEW has been here to provide testimony. We can't kick the can down the road any longer. If Covid has taught us anything it's that we should head off problems before they happen and not after. We should be proactive and not reactive when it comes to protecting workers and Maryland residents. We know this is an issue that needs to be addressed. We need to address it now before something tragic happens that would have been avoided. Then we will all be asking ourselves why these standards weren't already in place.

This bill is not perfect, but it's a very good bill and when the workgroup met this past year there was compromise! But it addresses real areas of concern in the industry. It's not often that my non-union counterparts are sitting on the same side of an issue as we are here but that's how important this issue is to our Industry and the residents of this great State of Maryland.

That's why I'm asking for you to give it a **Favorable** report. Thank you again to the committee for your time, and thank you to Senator McCray for sponsoring this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,



Peter P. Demchuk

PPD:clr
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