

Letter of Support

SB 298 - State Board of Electricians - Licensing - Penalties

This bill will empower the State Board of Electricians (“the Board”) to treat a minor infraction, such as completing a continuing education course a day late, differently than a violation of crucial safety protocols in the electrical code.

Under the current statute, if a licensed Electrician commits an infraction of the Electricians Act, the Board has two options: take no action or revoke their license. Because the Board's mandate is to protect Maryland's citizens from harm and enforce the Statutes, they are often compelled to revoke licensure for even minor infractions.

This bill would grant the Board the authority to issue civil penalties for an infraction of the Electricians Act. Under the current statute, the Board is limited to one option - the revocation of a license for any violation.

Every other occupational profession has a civil penalty section. The addition of this provision will bring the Board into parity with the other Boards.

SB298 was sought at the request of litigators in the Department to establish the Electrician Board's authority to impose a sanction against a licensed individual charged with a specific violation of BOP 6-316. Such language, in place for most other O&P boards and commissions, was omitted from 6-316 when statewide electrician licensing was established in 2021, *transferring enforcement authority for regulatory violations from local jurisdictions to the State Board*. The language proposed is what appears in identically-worded provisions providing the grounds for disciplinary action against a licensee for almost every other if not every other, O&P board and commission.

For the above reasons, the Department respectfully requests a **favorable report** by the Committee on SB298.