

Letter of Support

SB 298 - State Board of Electricians - Licensing - Penalties

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

This bill will empower 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.

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

This bill will also allow the Board to take civil action against unlicensed individuals. Currently, an individual who performs electrical work without a license can only be charged criminally, which is often a disproportionate penalty. Enacting a civil penalty will allow the Board to adjust its enforcement strategy in these situations and resolve them proportionately. Individuals who made an honest mistake but did not cause lasting harm should not necessarily be saddled with a criminal conviction.

For the above reasons, the Department respectfully requests a **favorable report** by the Committee on SB 298.