



DAN KNODL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 24TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Committee on Labor
Assembly Bill 35
State Representative Dan Knodl
February 20, 2013

Thank you Mr. Chair and committee members for attending this hearing to discuss Assembly Bill 35 which addresses 2007 Act 63, which provides for statewide electrical licensing on April 1st.

I was first contacted on this issue by a large manufacturer in the state. They brought to my attention that routine electrical work that they are doing when repositioning equipment would now require them to have a master electrician on staff in addition to have to apply for numerous permits.

After bringing these concerns to various other constituency groups and hearing from colleagues, who in turn are hearing from businesses and constituents, it became apparent that Act 63 has serious flaws.

The proposed bill, Assembly Bill 35, does not eliminate Act 63, but only delays implementation to give the legislature the ability to address the numerous problems in the upcoming law. This is preferred over having the law go into effect and having many entities unlikely to comply.

The issues with Act 63 include, but are not limited to; the needs of small business, who have been doing routine electrical work, with experienced staff for years - will now have to hire outside contractors - adding additional costs and time to their operations. Sign installers and real estate managers have no clear statutory definition of under what circumstances they can even change a lighting ballast. Habitat for Humanity has raised concerns that it may substantially increase the cost of building low income housing. Additional problems continue to come up as the Act nears implementation and our constituents realize how it will affect them. This is a non-partisan concern.

At a time when our economy is struggling to get back on its feet, we need to be sensitive that these regulations don't negatively affect the efforts of our job creators. That is why I am asking the legislature to delay implementation of Act 63. Doing this will give us time to meet with all stakeholders and address their needs in a bi- partisan, proactive manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

February 20, 2013

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Labor
From: Senator Glenn Grothman
Re: Assembly Bill 35

I am in favor of Assembly Bill 35 which will delay the effective date of 2007 Act 63. This legislation was drafted at the request of many constituents, legislators, and citizens of Wisconsin that have found significant problems with the licensing and registration requirements within Act 63.

There are many reasons to put a delay on the effective date of the language in the 2007 legislation and I will outline a few reasons below.

- Older Electricians, who have at least thirty years of experience, would have to go through training and examination to receive a license.
- Replacement of fluorescent boxes would have to be done by a licensed electrician. We have heard from landlords that this would greatly increase their maintenance costs.
- Installation of illuminated signs will now have to be installed by licensed electricians. Sign companies have told us that this will even be true for signs that are only hung and plugged in to an outlet.
- Electricians will be unable to volunteer their time for worthy organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity.

Therefore, Representative Knodl and I are forming working groups to make sure that all of the issues are resolved. In order to put together thorough legislation we must delay the effective date from April 2013 to April 2014. This simple bill will ensure that electricians and other professionals will be able to not only keep their jobs, but perform their duties without onerous regulation on their profession.



The Wisconsin IBEW Inside Construction Conference and the Wisconsin Chapter of NECA stand together opposed to AB 35.

The IBEW Inside Construction unions represent 9 construction locals covering all of Wisconsin and have 8,000 members. The Wisconsin Chapter of NECA represents 250 signatory contractors in Wisconsin. Our two organizations exist because of our member's desire to be the best they can be in our industry.

We strongly supported the creation of electrical licensing to not only raise the standards of the industry but also to provide the best safety and quality to the businesses and residents of Wisconsin. In the years it took to develop the electrical licensing program and rules, the most common comment heard from the businesses and public we serve was the amazement that licensing did not already exist.

To further delay licensing will have several negative effects on the construction industry and our members – effects that will cost jobs and lose work for our members.

Currently Minnesota has a mandatory licensing program. For our Wisconsin residents and contractors to work in Minnesota they must test to receive that license. 16 states have a reciprocity agreement that allows residents of one state to automatically receive a license in another state that is part of the reciprocity agreement. A basic requirement to be part of the group is to have a mandatory licensing program. Minnesota contractors can come into Wisconsin and do work; we do not have that open luxury in Minnesota. With licensing approaching Minnesota is now willing to work on reciprocity, a one year delay will just continue the inequity of the current system hurting an industry that is seeing 20% unemployment.

A second hurdle for our members and contractors is continuing education. If you have a license in another state you must go to that state to take classes to meet any continuing education requirements. The financial burden is huge for our contractors trying to work outside the state while contractors from outside Wisconsin have no such burden. Again reciprocity will allow Wisconsin classes to meet the requirements for licensing in other states.

It has been 5 years since Act 63 was passed. It has been 5 years for anyone affected by electrical licensing to clarify and meet any requirements. A further one year delay will just hurt jobs and employment opportunities for the construction workers and contractors in Wisconsin. Do not delay the job opportunity this bill provides our industry.