

HCS HB 2673 -- MECHANICAL CONTRACTOR LICENSES

SPONSOR: Mathews

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Workforce Development by a vote of 7 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 4.

This bill establishes the "Missouri Statewide Mechanical Contractor Licensing Act." The statewide mechanical license for mechanical contractors is to be regulated by the Division of Professional Registration, within the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Profession Registration. The bill creates the "Office of Mechanical Contractors" within the division which will carry out the provisions of this bill.

Statewide mechanical licenses include work as defined by the codes written and published by the International Code Council. The division may also require additional certification for a particular scope of mechanical work. Each corporation, firm, institution, organization, company, or representative thereof engaging in mechanical contracting shall employ at least one statewide license holder. A statewide licensed mechanical contractor can only represent one entity at a time.

In order to obtain a statewide mechanical license an applicant must be at least 21 years old, provide proof of liability insurance in the amount of \$500,000, post a bond in each political subdivision in which he or she works, pass a standardized and nationally accredited mechanical assessment exam, and have completed 7,500 hours of verifiable field experience in the mechanical industry or a degree in mechanical or civil engineering with a minimum of three years verifiable experience directing and supervising at least one field employee. Certain individuals holding mechanical contractor licenses from political subdivisions can qualify for a statewide license. The bill specifies the conditions that must be met to renew a statewide license.

Political subdivisions shall not be prohibited from establishing their own local electrical contractor's licenses, but must recognize a statewide license in lieu of a local license for the purposes of performing contracting work or obtaining permits to perform work with the political subdivision. Any person operating as a mechanical contractor in a political subdivision that does not require the mechanical contractor to hold a local license, or who possesses a license required by a political subdivision, shall not be required to possess a statewide license to operate as a mechanical contractor in such political subdivisions.

There is created in the state treasury the "Missouri Mechanical Contractor Licensing Fund" which shall consist of moneys collected under the provisions of this bill, and which shall be expended for the administration of the provisions of this bill.

The division is authorized to refuse to issue a license or cause a complaint to be filed against a license holder as specified in the bill. Any person who knowingly violates the provisions of this bill is guilty of a class B misdemeanor. The division is authorized to enforce the provisions of this bill by civil action.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the statewide license will promote economic opportunity and fairness; it does not require a license in a local area that does not have one, but eliminates duplicate license requirements.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Mathews; Mechanical Contractors Association of Kansas City; Mechanical Contractors Associations of Eastern Missouri; Joy M. Williams, Williams Heating & Cooling; Greg Peters, Peters Heating & Air Conditioning; Terry Rosenstrauch; Robert Hoffmann, Hoffmann Brothers; Associated Builders and Contractors Heart of America; Brian Agers; Kellie Jones, Gateway Air Conditioning Contractors; Corey Malone, Gateway Air Comfort Services Inc; Missouri Coalition for Fair Competition; and Shane Awtrey.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say because mechanical contractors can work on advanced systems such as ammonia cooling systems or superheated steam, minimum standards are not enough to protect public safety.

Testifying on the bill was Scott Ramshaw, Plumbers & Pipefitters 562.