
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 3127

Brief Description: Evaluating armed service experience in specialized electrical fields.

Sponsors: Representative McMorris.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Specifies that, for purposes of certifying electricians, armed service experience allowed as a substitute for work experience should include building construction experience and shipboard experience.

Hearing Date: 2/4/04

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) administers various state laws governing the electrical trade, including those dealing with certification of journey level and specialty electricians. These laws require that most persons who perform electrical work be certified as journey level electricians or appropriate specialty electricians. To become certified, persons must meet certain experience and/or educational requirements, and pass an examination.

Qualifications for Certification

For example, to become a journey level electrician, a person must complete either 8,000 hours of full-time work experience, of which 4,000 must be in commercial or industrial work, or complete an apprenticeship program in the electrical construction trade. The person also must pass the appropriate examination. A person who has completed a two-year program in the electrical construction trade at a technical or trade school may substitute up to two years of the program for two years of work experience. A person who has received training in the electrical construction trade in the armed service may be eligible to apply armed service experience towards the work experience requirement.

To become a specialty electrician, a person must complete either a specified number of hours of full-time work experience, or complete an apprenticeship program in the appropriate specialty. The person also must pass the appropriate examination. A person who has completed a two-year program in the electrical construction trade at a technical or trade school may substitute up to one year of the program for one year of work experience. A person who has received training in the

electrical construction trade in the armed service may be eligible to apply armed service experience towards the work experience requirement.

Current Law and Rule on Armed Service Experience

State law requires the Department to determine whether hours of training and experience and in technical or trade school programs and in the armed service are in the electrical construction trade and appropriate as a substitute for hours of work experience. It specifies criteria for evaluating the equivalence of technical or trade school programs, but not for evaluating the equivalence of armed service experience.

The Department's rules indicate that "nuclear, marine, radar, weapons, aeronautical experience, or similar experience may not be acceptable." Armed service experience "should be related to the building construction trade, not shipboard, aircraft, weapons, or similar installations."

Proposed Rule on Armed Service Experience

In the spring and summer of 2003, the Department invited stakeholders in the electrical industry to submit proposed additions and/or revisions to the rules. One proposed revision dealt with the rule on armed service experience, and suggested allowing certain types of armed service experience (nuclear, marine, and shipboard) to be substituted for work experience.

In the summer of 2003, the Department formed a technical advisory committee to review and make recommendations on proposed revisions to the rules. The Department specified that the committee would operate on a consensus agreement basis, meaning that unanimous or near unanimous agreement by committee members would be necessary to recommend a change to the rules. The committee unanimously agreed to "accept in principle" the proposed revision to the rule on armed service experience.

Last Thursday (January 29, 2004), the Electrical Board met to review and make its final recommendations to the Department on proposed revisions to the rules. The Electrical Board recommended adoption of all of the proposed revisions, including the proposed revision to the rule on armed service experience.

In the spring of 2004, the Department plans to file the proposed rules, hold public hearings on them, and then issue a rule-making order to adopt them.

Summary of Bill:

Criteria for evaluating the equivalence of armed service experience are specified. The Department may allow armed service experience as a substitute for work experience if the experience is in a field that is similar to a specialty recognized in rule. Armed service experience allowed as a substitute for work experience should include, but is not limited to, building construction and shipboard experience.

Rules Authority: The bill does not contain provisions addressing the rule-making powers of an agency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2004.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.