

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5282

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, January 30, 2015

Title: An act relating to residential security system installations.

Brief Description: Concerning residential security system installations.

Sponsors: Senators Braun, Baumgartner and Warnick.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 1/26/15, 1/30/15 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5282 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Baumgartner, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair; King and Warnick.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hasegawa, Ranking Minority Member; Conway and Keiser.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) has responsibility for permitting and inspecting new and altered electrical systems in all types of installations throughout the state. L&I also administers the electrical certification laws, and anyone seeking to engage in the business of doing electrical work must have an electrical contractor license, and anyone who works in the electrical construction trade must be certified as a journeyman or specialty electrician. Electrical work of any kind is subject to permit and inspection requirements unless exempt, and the individual doing the work must have the appropriate license and certification, unless similarly exempt. State law contains a number of exemptions from both the permit and inspection, and license and certification requirements.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Work limited to the installation, repair, or maintenance of a low-voltage security alarm in a one or two-family dwelling is exempt from state permit and inspection requirements, and no certificate is required for the individual performing the work.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY COMMERCE & LABOR COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): The substitute bill preserves the requirement in existing law that a contractor seeking to engage in the business of installing low-voltage security alarms must obtain an electrical contractor license.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: These are outdated laws that are making it difficult for security companies to hire additional employees to do the sort of work covered by the legislation. The bill would recognize the alarm industry as its own specialized field. Much of the work performed by security installers does not need to be performed by a licensed electrician, as most of the systems are plug and play that require very little wiring. The components are low voltage and need not be performed by trained and certified electricians. Trained electricians work below their training and skill level when installing these systems and the bill would allow companies to better use these resources.

CON: Electrical installations should be done in a way that is safe for the workers and for the public. At lot of homes in Washington have older wiring systems, and there is risk for knocking around these wires when running cables through the wall. There's also a professionalism concern; current electricians have a state-issued ID card and can show that to homeowners. The electrical industry is serious about electrical installations and electrical work. Care should be exercised when allowing individuals who aren't electricians to go into walls with existing wires and install new components.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Braun, prime sponsor; Amy Brackenbury, Tim Nickols, ADT Security.

CON: Nicole Grant, Executive Director, Certified Electrical Workers of WA; Clint Bryson, Business Representative, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 76; Wendy Brown, IBEW 46; Lee Newgent, Executive Secretary, WA State Building and Construction Trades Council; Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Assn.