

Lou Mansolillo

From: Mike Auger <inspectormikeauger@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 7:32 AM
To: Rep. Solomon, Joseph J. Jr.
Cc: Rep. O'Brien, William W.; House Corporations Committee; Rep. Roberts, Sherry
Subject: Re: House Bill 7015 regarding electrical license add additional repercussions

Additionally regarding my previous email, there are repercussions that you may not have considered. If this bill passes it'll set a precedent that's dangerous, then perhaps the plumbing union will do the same, then the carpenters, then the roofers, then the HVAC guys, etc... before you know it homeowners will have to have eight or nine different inspectors at the house instead of a home inspection costing a few hundred dollars it will cost a few thousand dollars. Homeownership in Rhode Island is already difficult (working class families can barely afford to buy a house and come up with a down payment) imagine trying to come up with \$5000 for all the different inspections that you need because you can't hire a generalist home inspector.

Remember the state just began distributing licenses about four years ago because Rhode Island decided that home inspectors were a viable and important enough trade to license. This bill begins the domino effect that could basically make the inspection industry in RI disappear.

Please take caution when voting to protect not only the buyers safety but don't forget the 140 or so hard-working families that perform home inspections for a living, and our businesses will basically be disintegrated.

Respectfully,

Mike Auger, CMI
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On May 31, 2024, at 7:06 AM, Mike Auger <inspectormikeauger@gmail.com> wrote:

To whom it concerns regarding house Bill 7015, again. I would greatly appreciate you reading the letter aloud to the folks in attendance at the proceedings, at least appreciate you taking the time to read the following and share with the council members and use it as consideration before making any final decisions:

As one of the very first home inspectors licensed in the state of Rhode Island, and an operating home inspector since about 2007, I strongly oppose the language in this bill that would prohibit home inspectors from performing electrical inspections. INSPECTIONS WHAT IM LICENSED TO DO!

Several states across the country have licensing for home inspectors and NONE of them have this language; ALL of them allow home inspectors to perform electrical inspections, which includes taking the NON ENERGIZED DEAD FRONT cover off of the service panel to visually inspect it. We're also licensed to be checking receptacles with a tester, and using a proximity/noncontact tester to determine if Dangerous circuits such as knob and tube or other exposed wires are present and energized. We do these inspections for the safety of the buyers to prevent personal injury risks such as electrocution and fire hazards. We find several hundred deficiencies a year all of which we refer to licensed electricians for repair.

Rhode Island mandates licensing for home inspectors for the safety of folks buying property. If it is truly about safety (like virtually every license including the electrical license), prohibiting us from doing our job to protect our customers from dangerous situations and conditions is counter to the safety that we provide as home inspectors.

If the home inspector is not permitted to inspect the electrical system, a customer will incur probably double the expense by having to bring in a separate licensed electrician to perform the electrical inspection. This means that the electrician would have to check all the plugs within the house, climb in the attic and check for dangerous knob and tube wiring or improper wiring, open the service panels, etc. The home inspector is already in these areas performing this and because of the comprehensive nature of our inspection, and the fact that we go to all these locations anyway, it becomes more cost-effective for the customer to have us check it while we're already there. Scheduling an electrician within a 10 day period (most purchase and sale agreements have a contingency period of only 10 days to get the inspections performed), is very difficult, if not impossible in most cases. An electrician/contractor business is not set up like a home inspector, who is available usually within a 10 day period. Most of the time when you reach out to a contractor like an electrician or plumber you've got to wait weeks for them to come out there. This just doesn't fit into the real estate transaction schedule. If scheduling can't occur, then the electrical inspection will be skipped leaving tens of thousands of families every year at risk having potential dangerous electrical conditions within the home that they don't even know about.

The electricians may argue that it is dangerous for us to remove or reinstall the cover to the service panel. However, there are zero documented instances of home inspector injury, or damage to the electrical system during this process of inspecting electrical within Rhode Island. I would argue that the dead front cover is not energized and opening the cover is no more dangerous for us than it would be for an electrician anyway with very low risk. We don't consider reinstalling a dead front cover installing electrical equipment. This is not an energized component.

Additionally, the home inspector licensing rules dictate that a home inspector cannot provide services or remedies to homes they inspect within a two-year period to prevent conflict of interest. This is a great rule. This means the home inspectors cannot perform repairs or pest treatment etc. on a house that they inspect to limit the potential conflict of interest where deficiencies found could lead to future paying jobs.

This provision is not present for licensed electricians. Meaning that this conflict of interest is still potentially there. If an electrician performed an inspection within a home inspection capacity, they should also be prohibited from providing electrical services not only them but their entire company/union, For the two-year period, just like home inspectors. I'm quite certain that the electrical contractors union would never go for something like this obviously. There is no provision for that in this

bill and licensed electricians are licensed through the department of labor and training and not bound to Contractor licensing and registration board rules as currently configured.

It seems to be the nature of the bill is potentially to provide opportunity for the electricians to obtain more work, home inspectors do advise the customers to fix electrical deficiencies by hiring only licensed, qualified electricians.

The best solution is to allow home inspectors to continue to practice, as stated by their home inspector license, and I would recommend the bill be modified to exclude home inspectors performing inspection duties. The home inspector licensing law was just recently put into effect a few years ago, but many of us have been practicing for a decade or longer. The state put rules in place for a reason and now he's trying to go back on them? This doesn't make any sense.

This is a reasonable modification (allowing home inspectors to open the dead front cover and perform checks of receptacles, etc., as previously stated) and puts us in line with all of the other electrical unions throughout the country. This is best for the customer, it's best for the inspector. It's also best for the real estate folks during a real estate transaction because of the scheduling nightmare, which this will present.

Home inspectors are not performing electrical work. We are performing inspections of the systems within the house. We are licensed, trained, vetted, insured all as required by the state of Rhode Island. We're also required to obtain continuing education every year to stay current in our trade. We should be able to continue to do our job and provide the best service for the safety of the homebuyer within our state.

Sincerely, respectfully

Any reply would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

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