

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1391
By: Schaefer
Licensing & Administrative Procedures
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, electrician jobs are expected to grow by over seven percent by 2031. The federal government projects in Texas alone will see a staggering 26.9 percent growth in the industry by 2030. Electrical work is a growing field, but the number of people entering the field is decreasing. Much of the shortage is due to current workers retiring combined with the intense regulations that are required to enter the electrical industry. In Texas, one of the reasons for the shortage is that the electricians code and state regulations make it extremely difficult for an individual to enter the trade or pursue a career in the electrical industry. C.S.H.B. 1391 seeks to address the shortage by removing barriers and creating opportunity for high school or community college students to receive a residential wireman license after taking the required classes, practical components, and passing the licensing examination.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1391 amends the Occupations Code to provide for the creation of a sequence of courses in the electrical trade to be offered through career and technology education programs. With respect to a program providing such a sequence of courses, the bill does the following:

- authorizes a person who successfully completes the sequence of courses to apply for and take an examination for a residential wireman license, regardless of whether the person has completed the 4,000 hours of on-the-job training otherwise required;
- provides that, for purposes of these provisions, a "career and technology education program" means either a career and technology education program offered by a public school district or a similar program, as determined by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, offered by a private school or by an institution of higher education;
- requires the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation (TCLR) to adopt rules establishing standards for the essential knowledge and skills of a program, subject to the approval of the State Board of Education if the courses are offered in a high school, and requires the rules to:
 - require the program to consist of an appropriate number of hours of classroom instruction and a practical component; and
 - provide for crediting appropriate on-the-job training toward meeting the requirements of the practical component;

- requires TCLR to consult with the Texas State Technical College and relevant interest groups in the electrical industry in developing the initial program standards;
- provides that a person of any age enrolled in a career and technology education program is eligible to take the sequence of courses without being licensed under the Texas Electrical Safety and Licensing Act but clarifies that the person is not authorized to perform electrical work without the appropriate license outside of the program;
- establishes that hours spent completing the program may not be credited toward any on-the-job training required to apply for a license under that act;
- prohibits a program offered by an institution of higher education from being more stringent than a program offered by a public high school; and
- prohibits a person from providing program instruction unless the person is licensed as a master electrician, journeyman electrician, or residential wireman and exempts a license holder who provides instruction from the requirement to pay a license renewal fee.

The bill requires TCLR to adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 1391 differs from the introduced only by amending the caption.