

Chairman Reitz and members of the Senate Local Government committee,

I would like to be recorded as a proponent of HB2666.

This bill is the product of the efforts of stakeholders from across the state over the course of the summer and fall of last year. Those active in related trades worked together to discuss possible changes, solutions, and improvements in legislation for our industries. This bill is one of the results from those discussions.

As a co-owner of Weber Refrigeration & Heating, Inc., an HVAC company that operates in western Kansas and the surrounding region, I support this bill because it permits the continued practice of allowing those who have studied and prepared themselves to acquire a Journeyman or Master license in a reasonable amount of time. On principle, passing the test is a gauge for measuring the ability of a person in a given trade. That said, I recognize the importance of having an experience component to ensure the knowledge is coupled with practical experience. But this required experience must not extend to the point that it hinders recruiting persons into a given trade, or takes an unreasonable amount of time to become licensed, increasing the time it takes for a person to earn a respectable wage.

My request is that this bill be recommended favorably for passage without any amendments that may work to the detriment of our industry and other related industries. Some of the ideas that were shared by others across the state included raising the experience requirement for a Journeyman license from two years to four years. This and other suggestions did not receive widespread support from the stakeholders and would hinder the growth of companies by increasing overhead and slowing the addition of new jobs. Some municipalities require a Journeyman before an individual can work alone on a project. Increasing the length of time to acquire a Journeyman ensures more “helpers” or two person teams working on one person projects. Again this is costly, slows the growth of a company, and slows the addition of new jobs.

At some point I do hope to address the issue of redundant continuing education requirements placed on license holders, especially those holding multiple licenses (i.e. mechanical, plumbing, electrical) even when no change or revision has been made to the code that is enforced. Because we have offices in both Kansas and Oklahoma I am well versed in the different approaches to continuing education. And with that, we employ those with multiple licenses in both states, compounding the continuing education situation.

Thank you for the opportunity to address some of these topics and HB2666.

Rep. Brian Weber – 119th District
Kansas House of Representatives