

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1465

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSIONER OF CONSUMER PROTECTION
TO ALLOW CERTAIN SKILLED TRADE LICENSEES TO DEVIATE FROM

Title: CERTAIN SKILLED TRADE HIRING RATIOS.

Vote Date: 3/21/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/19/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

General Law Committee

Co-sponsors:

Senator Paul Cicarella, 34th District

REASONS FOR BILL:

This legislation intends to address Connecticut's shortage of skilled construction workers. Currently, contractors in selected trades are subject to hiring ratios that limit the number of apprentices they may hire. State statute prescribes how many journeypersons must be hired for each apprentice, but the pool of journeypersons is limited, and many are aging out of the workforce.

When Connecticut changed the hiring ratios in 2017, a working group convened that did not reach a consensus on updated hiring ratios. However, they did agree that the current ratio relief application process, which is administered through the Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship Training, needs an overhaul.

SB 1465 would shift oversight of ratio relief applications to the Department of Consumer Protection and would allow sponsors to apply for relief when they can (1) demonstrate a legitimate need and (2) show that they are providing high-quality training and supervision to apprentices on the jobsite. The legislation also grants automatic approval if the Commissioner of Consumer Protection does not send notice of a decision within ten business days.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Bryan Cafferelli, Commissioner, Department of Consumer Protection](#) submitted written comments on SB 1465. He expresses concern about the proposed ten-day turnaround time on applications. Commissioner Cafferelli requests that the language be amended to require that applications first be submitted to the Department of Labor (DOL) so that apprentices can

be registered because this change would make it clear that apprentices still must be registered with the DOL. The Department looks forward to continuing the conversation on this issue.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Supports Joint Favorable Substitute vote: [Kimberly Glassman, Director, Foundation for Fair Contracting of Connecticut, Inc. \(FFC\)](#) testified in support of SB 1465 because it presents an opportunity to overhaul the ratio relief application process. FFC and member organizations are generally in favor of shifting responsibility for application review to DCP, but they request that the language be amended to give the Commissioner clear standards by which application decisions must be made. FFC looks forward to continuing to work with the committee to refine the bill's language, and they encourage the committee to support a Joint Favorable Substitute vote. *(note: JFS language was not yet agreed upon when the Committee took final action.)*

Supports with amendments: [Paul Costello, Joint Apprenticeship Training Center, National Electrical Contractors Association and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 90 \(JATC\)](#) testified in support of SB 1465 with amendments that would add specificity to the language. The JATC is generally supportive of SB 1465's efforts to streamline the ratio relief process. Mr. Costello argues that SB 1465's approach is more effective than sweeping changes to hiring ratios because it ensures that sponsors have a legitimate need and that apprentices will still receive high-quality supervision. JATC requests three amendments:

- (1) Criteria for evaluating ratio relief applications should be more clearly defined.
- (2) Rather than basing ratio relief requests on the number of license holders within a company, base it on the number of license holders actively supervising apprentices at a jobsite.
- (3) Reserve a certain number of additional apprenticeship slots for students enrolled in the CTTECH Work-Based Learning Program.

[Kristen Abrahamson, Executive Vice President, Mechanical Contractors Association of Connecticut \(MCAC\)](#) submitted written testimony in support of SB 1465. She reviews the history of the 2017 hiring ratio working group and notes the group's consensus that the ratio relief application process could be improved. MCAC looks forward to continuing to work with the committee to refine the ratio relief application process.

Supports Joint Favorable Substitute vote: [Jay More, Business Agent, United Association Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 777 Business Agent](#) submitted written testimony in support of SB 1465. After recalling the conclusions reached by the 2017 working group, Mr. More notes his organization's support for putting the application process under the purview of DCP. He requests that when a contractor submits a ratio relief application, they should be required to specify the number of Journeymen they employ. His organization believes that no contractor should ever employ more Journeymen than Apprentices.

Support Joint Favorable Substitute vote: [Michael Colombo, President/Business Manager](#) and [Thomas Picheco, Business Representative, Sheet Metal Workers Local 38](#) submitted testimony in favor of putting the ratio relief application process under the

purview of DCP. They both urge the committee to support a Joint Favorable Substitute vote, but they do not specify what changes they would like included in substitute language.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

State Representative Tim Ackert, 8th District writes in favor of adding more licensed trade workers to Connecticut's workforce but against the approach taken in SB 1465.

Representative Ackert explains that he is also a Connecticut E-1 unlimited license holder whose company sponsors apprenticeships. He has served as both an apprenticeship and a continuing education instructor. Rep. Ackert argues that apprenticeships give people "the opening to start a great career," and he adds that expanding the pool of skilled trade workers will help our state meet our environmental and affordable housing goals while supplementing our tax base. He supplements his testimony with data from DCP and DOL. Overall, Rep. Ackert believes that the best way to accomplish this goal is to "eliminate the hiring ratio and use the job site ratio of one licensed journeyman to one apprentice."

Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO thanks the committee for its commitment to supporting the state's workforce. He notes that the Connecticut State Building Trades are working with committee leadership and the Department of Consumer Protection to overhaul the ratio relief application process. Mr. Hawthorne underscores the importance of ensuring that any changes prevent abuse, maintain high standards, and provide quality mentorship to apprentices. Connecticut AFL-CIO looks forward to continuing dialogue on this issue.

Allie French, Executive Director, Independent Electrical Contractors New England (IEC New England) expresses general support for moving the ratio relief application process under the purview of DCP. However, they would like to see three additions to SB 1465's language:

- (1) To ensure fairness, the legislation should include precise criteria for renewal or denial of applications.
- (2) All decisions should be sent to the program sponsor electronically along with the reason for denial or approval.
- (3) DCP should be required to develop an online system for application submission, and all requests should be publicly available on the DCP website.

In addition to suggesting changes to SB 1465, IEC New England urges the committee to support the proposed bill before the Commerce Committee (HB 6786) that addresses the hiring ratio restriction itself.

Christopher Fryxell, President, Associated Builders & Contractors, CT Chapter (CT ABC) submitted written testimony that appreciates the intent of SB 1465 but argues that it does not adequately address Connecticut's shortage of skilled workers. CT ABC urges the committee to instead "support changes to the hiring ratio which would eliminate the need for a ratio relief process." Regardless of which approach the committee and the legislature choose to take, CT ABC is eager to participate in the process of reforming the apprenticeship hiring system.

Jim Perras, CEO, Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut (HBRA-CT) characterizes SB 1465 as a "step in the right direction" toward addressing Connecticut's labor shortage but urges the committee to instead support HB 6786 in the Commerce Committee. Mr. Perras points out that SB 1465 does not provide a clear and predictable

solution, and he argues that it creates administrative hurdles for contractors. He argues that HB 6786 is a more effective solution because it would permanently establish a 1:1 apprentice-to-licensee hiring ratio. Mr. Perras suggests that reforming hiring ratios would directly address Connecticut's housing crisis by allowing contractors to train more workers, who could then more quickly build homes, apartments, and infrastructure projects.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Mike Trahan, Executive Director, Connecticut Solar and Storage Association \(CONNSSA\)](#) opposes SB 1465, arguing that it stifles job creation. He thinks that the hiring ratio relief application process is too broken to be fixed. Mr. Trahan states that SB 1465 only "marginally improves" the current decision-making process and stalls the hiring of new apprentices. He urges the committee to support HB 6786, which would permanently establish a 1:1 hiring ratio.

[Lito Deveza](#) submitted testimony opposing SB 1465 for personal reasons largely unrelated to the content of the bill.

Reported by: Betsy Francolino

Date: March 23, 2025