



## Maine Administrators of Career & Technical Education

1022 Waterville Rd, Waldo, ME 04915

[mainecte@nptregioniii.com](mailto:mainecte@nptregioniii.com)

**Executive Director**  
David Keaton

**President**  
Amanda Peterson

**President Elect**  
Robert Deetjen

**Treasurer**  
David Morse

**Business Manager**  
Joya Maynard

**Executive Committee**  
Kevin Lavoie  
Nicholas Gannon  
Paulette Bonneau  
Rob Callahan  
Ralph Conroy  
Brian Leavitt

### TESTIMONY REGARDING

L.D. 2133

#### An Act to Expand the Use of Career and Technical Education Centers in the Development of the Electrician Workforce

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement & Business Committee. I am Dave Keaton, Executive Director of Maine Administrators of Career & Technical Education, testifying on behalf of the CTE Directors of the Maine Administrators of Career & Technical Education (MACTE). The CTE Directors Association is in opposition to this bill.

After reviewing this bill, we are not able to endorse it. While its intentions are meant for good, and we appreciate someone speaking up for CTE students and pathways for their future, we believe this bill misses the mark on the training required to become a JIT. We have close relationships with our business and industry partners and an example, 4 owners of Electrical Contracting companies, Carmel Electric, Hampden Electric, Gifford Electric, and Duffy's Electric, which together have employed hundreds of electricians they are not in favor of this bill. We also have contact from the IBEW Local Union training director, and after a conversation with them, they are not in favor of this bill. We also were in contact with Cianbro's Training Director, and they are not in favor. We consistently believe that CTE students should have the ability to become a JIT in their pathway to becoming a Journeyman, but my benchmark starts at 4000 hrs., and some industry people we have talked to seem to be more comfortable with 5000 hrs.

We would like to point out some of our concerns with this CTE proposed legislation:

- **Safety:** The NFPA 70 Electrical Code is written by the National Fire Protection Agency for a reason: electrical fires are easy to create when installations are not done in a workmanlike manner. The Code is not an installation guide but a minimum standard to protect people and property from electrical hazards. Being able to pass a Journeyman Code exam is an Academic accomplishment, and that is not enough to become a qualified electrician who can install electrical equipment safely. Arc flashes in a main distribution panel can be a deadly consequence of improper training, and a six-month helper would not be allowed in a live MDP, let alone working in one alone, but this bill would allow that. Electrocution to personnel who are using the finished product of an electrical installation can lead to death because it takes less than 100 milliamps to stop a person's heart. To put that into perspective, a typical 12-watt LED bulb using 120 volts draws 100 milliamps! Lastly, the long-term effects of an improper installation can be found years later when a termination finally fails and a fire ensues. These types of installs are typical of a training helper, and that is why oversight is required for a minimum of 4,000 hours, which is currently the shortest pathway to becoming a Journeyman.

- **Training:** Passing an Exam is one step in the process of becoming a licensed electrician. Training a helper to be prepared for the plethora of installations that an electrician is licensed to perform takes more than the current 4000 hrs. required by college graduates, but at least those students have passed college courses in advanced electrical disciplines. It is unwise to think of an electrician as simply wiring homes or doing lighting upgrades. Our licenses allow us to work on Hospitals, Industrial facilities, and any retail/commercial building in the state of Maine. A six-month helper would have no clue about these installations but would be allowed by the State of Maine to legally work in any of those locations.

- **Devaluing our License:** We currently have high standards in relation to other states when it comes to reciprocity agreements when other states realize that we have lowered our standards to the level that an 18 yr. old with 2000 hrs. of on-the-job training (1000 hours from a CTE high school experience) could be licensed to work on their own, the ramifications could be tragic.

- **Costs:** When a person receives a Journeyman license, the immediate next step is an increase in wages. The reasons for a wage increase are that the person is now more valuable to the employer because they have proven their work over 4000 hrs., have completed the state-required courses at a community college, passed the Journeyman exam, and can now work alone, and have a helper work under their license. Very little of the pay increase is due to the person being significantly qualified to run jobs on their own; in fact, the people on my advisory board agree that another 4,000 hours are usually needed before a Journeyman has seen enough situations to be truly self-sufficient. On the other hand, a company that wants a “paper” license,

like a Solar Installer, will pay the proposed JIT license holders more money than they are worth, and that will continue to drive up prices in the Electrical industry as it responds to the compensation for higher wage increases. Higher costs are proven to be a deterrent to growth in the private sector, and they contribute to artificially elevating the value of labor.

- Expectations: A student entering the electrical trade has visions of what they think their job will be and the money they will make. When they quickly realize that the JIT brings high expectations from their employer to match the money they are asking for, many will become overwhelmed and discouraged due to the fact they are incapable of performing basic installs without assistance. Being pushed into a situation you are not prepared for as an electrician leads to safety hazards, dangerous installations, costly mistakes, and eventually, the feeling that the person doesn't have what it takes to be an electrician, and they leave the trade completely.

We look forward to discussing this matter with all of you in future work sessions.

Yours in education,

**Dave Keaton**

Dave Keaton, MACTE Executive Director