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LD 509

As a Master Electrician, a small business owner, and an electrical instructor at Southern Maine Community College, I am writing to express my opposition to LD509, which would allow a single journeyman electrician to supervise 3 helpers, rather than 1.

In my office at SMCC, I have a small collection of melted electrical outlets and wires and switches. I have collected these over the last few years that I've been teaching and also running my business on the side. They are from electrical installations that were not properly installed, in some cases because screws were not tightened enough, in others because the wrong size wire was used. I found all of them in the course of doing service calls in peoples' houses. In one case I removed and replaced an outlet that had literally melting plastic while a toddler played in the same room.

It takes time to learn the proper theory and practice of doing electrical installations, and the consequences of the mistakes can be severe and even life-threatening, to the workers themselves and to the homeowners or business owners they're working for. It is vital that the people who are doing this work are adequately supervised. Any lowering of the standards would be irresponsibly valuing savings to business owners over safety. Thank you for your consideration of my perspective on this matter.